







# SPEECHES AND WRITINGS

MOTI LAL GHOSE



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## Introduction

Babu Moti Lal Ghose, one of the founders of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, who edited the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, was born in a small village named Polua Magura, subsequently named as Amrita Bazar after the name of his mother Amrita Moyee, in the District of Jessore on Thursday 12th of Kartick, 1254 Bengali Sal, corresponding to the 28th of October, 1847. His father Babu Hari Narayan Ghose was a well-to-do Pleader practising in the District Court of Jessore which was only ten miles away from his native village. In early life Moti Lal was for the most part educated in his village and at Jessore and after having passed the Entrance Examination he joined the Krishnagar College as a student of the First Arts Class. Fortunately or unfortunately he could not proceed with his studies beyond the First Arts Class. He did not appear at the F. A. Examination and had to give up studies and took up an appointment as the Head Master of a High English School at Piljong, in the District of Khulna. This was the beginning of his brilliant career. He was a very successful teacher and was loved and respected by all who came in contact with him. But he could not stay at Piljong for long. His health all along had been indifferent and it became worse at this place. In the year 1868 he gave up his job and came back to Magura from Piljong with a sum of Rs. 200/- (Rupees Two hundred only) in his pocket as the savings of his pay and joined his brothers.

Hemanta Kumar and Shishir Kumar in the starting of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*. In the columns of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* Babu Moti Lal has, from time to time, given graphic descriptions of the struggles and vicissitudes through which the *Patrika* had to pass to establish itself. *The Romance of An Indian Newspaper* appearing in this volume is one of the articles where he has narrated how he along with his brothers started it as a Bengalee Weekly with a wooden printing press and a few founts of second hand types, how they set the types, printed the papers, made the ink and wrote the copies all by themselves, how through official disfavour they had to leave their native village and set out for Calcutta with only a paltry sum of Rs. 300/- (Rupees Three hundred only) in their pocket with a big family consisting of not less than 30 members, how they settled in Calcutta and in two months' time started the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* as an Anglo-Bengalee diglot, how they again fell into official disfavour, how they converted the paper in one night from an Anglo-Bengalee to a wholly English one, and so forth and so on. All this is now matter for history and alas, men with first-hand knowledge of these things have passed away into a better world!

The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* was started in the year 1868 in the village Amrita Bazar; but the brothers who conducted the paper at that time could not carry it long in that place partly due to the ravages of malaria and partly due to official disfavour. So they came to Calcutta in 1871. At first they stayed in a house at Hideram Bannarjee Lane at Bow Bazar and moved from here in February 1872 that the first issue

of the paper came out in Calcutta as a Weekly (both in English and Bengalee). In 1874 they shifted to No. 2, Ananda Chatterjee Lane at Bagh Bazar, the present office of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*. The Vernacular Press Act was passed in the year 1878 and it was intended to be a violent blow to the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* but as soon as the Act was passed the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* was changed wholly into English. So it could not fall under the mischief of this Act.

Babu Shishir Kumar Ghose was the Chief Editor of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* for a quarter of a century. With his retirement from the hurly-burly of political life and from the active participation in the editorship of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* the editorship of the paper was taken over by his brother Babu Moti Lal Ghose. Since then he had done his work with conspicuous ability. When a lingering and serious illness led to the retirement of Babu Shishir Kumar Ghose from public life it formed the subject of comment in almost all the leading papers in India. The *Statesman*, a leading Anglo-Indian journal of the day (April 1888) wrote:—

“We should like to say a word or two as to the general character of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, and the criticism made thereon in the Anglo Indian Press. No one who has any personal knowledge of the two gentlemen who, we believe, jointly edit the paper,—the brothers Shishir Kumar Ghose and Moti Lal Ghose,—can fail to respect them. That they frequently write with extreme bitterness is true . . . . They are exceptionally able and earnest men,

endowed with strong instincts of right and wrong. They are not narrow men who merely 'hate the English' but men of broad and generous sympathies, whose nervous temperament makes them peculiarly sensitive to the injustice and brutality of the terms in which our public writers too commonly speak of their countrymen."

Babu Moti Lal Ghose came into prominence before the public eye in the year 1889 when he gave evidence before the Public Services Commission. In his evidence he pointed out that though there was an order of the Secretary of State for India passed in the year 1879 that all uncovenanted posts in the Post Office Department carrying a salary of Rs. 200/- or more per mensem should be made over to the Indians, yet almost all these posts were held by Europeans. He showed by incontrovertible facts and figures that not only was the department a family preserve of the heads of the departments but jobberies of every kind were practised in it. In short the department had been filled by the sons, sons-in-law, brothers and cousins of some of the Chief Officers, all Europeans, though they had no right to be in the department as they were not the "Natives of India". The exposure created such a scandal that the matter formed the subject of an interpellation in Parliament by Mr. Charles Bradlaugh with the result that Sir F. Hogg, the then head of the Post Offices was compelled to resign. The evidence of Babu Moti Lal did not go in vain. It secured for Indians many of the high offices in the Department from which they had been shut out and

which had been the sole monopoly of the interlopers. Referring to this matter the *Indian Daily News*, then a leading Anglo-Indian paper, wrote as follows:—

“When the Public Services Commission held its sittings at Calcutta, the ‘patriots’ fell fast asleep and it was only Babu Moti Lal Ghose the Joint-Editor of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, that satisfied the members of the Commission, citing innumerable instances, he came to know of, after a good deal of search, that the natives of the country were gradually losing their privileges to enter Government offices.”

Alas, how many of the present day holders of offices in the Postal Department know to-day or care to know that it was Babu Moti Lal Ghose who was greatly instrumental in opening the doors of the services in this department to the children of the soil!

It was on the 19th February 1891 that the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* made its first appearance as a daily. At this time both the Government and the country had gone mad over the Age of Consent Bill which wanted to raise the age of consent from ten years to twelve years on account of certain unfortunate incidents happening at the time. The Hindus wanted a daily paper to protest against this Bill which they thought was trying to make in-roads into Hindu social and religious customs. At their importunities the paper had to be converted from a weekly into a daily one. A densely crowded and representative meeting of the leading members of the Hindu community was held



at the residence of the late Babu Romanath Ghose in Pathuriaghata, Calcutta, to protest against the age of Consent Bill. In the report of the meeting published in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* of the 21st February 1891 (Daily Edition) we find that Babu Moti Lal Ghose attended that meeting as Editor of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*. A Committee was formed in that meeting to draw up a memorial to Lord Lansdowne the then Viceroy and Babu Moti Lal was selected as a member of that Committee.

From this time Moti Lal and his brothers had to labour hard, very hard for their paper. The difference between the task of conducting a weekly paper and that of conducting a daily one is enormous in all conscience and the difficulty in this case was all the greater as the change was a very sudden one. Moreover they were now in great difficulty both financially as well as on account of want of sufficient hands. To add to their troubles the eldest of the brothers who founded the journal Babu Hemanta Kumar Ghose passed away to a better world on Sunday 20th March 1892 just a year after the *Patrika* had been converted into a Daily. The gap created by the death of Babu Hemanta Kumar was filled up by Babu Golap Lal who assisted Babu Moti Lal till his last days.

The articles from the pen of Babu Moti Lal Ghose which were published in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* from day to day cover a wide variety of subjects. Indeed, it would be no exaggeration to say that there is no subject on which he did not wield his pen. He was the pioneer of Indian nationalism. A man of undaunted courage and acute intelligence, possessing,

in an admirable degree, the power of wielding a facile pen and armed with an ever-lasting fund of wit and satire which were at times even somewhat pungent and gifted with a profound sense of humour which corrected but did not sting his target, he was a champion of the weak and the oppressed and in his time he was considered by many who knew him as one of the greatest men of his age. He was a great personality in India. He did not like publicity and yet his name was a "household word in his own country" and he "had for forty years been one of the leaders of political progress unsparingly criticising men and measures" as said Sir Henry Cotton in his speech in Parliament on the Partition of Bengal. Babu Moti Lal always worked patiently and from behind and made self-abnegation his motto. He did not care for honours, either from Government or from people. What he cared for was work, solid work and nothing but work, work unalloyed with noise or flourish or beat of drums. He was not the hero of a hundred platforms. His fragile figure was seen before the footlight on a few occasions, though there was perhaps not a single public function worth the name in his time in which he did not take an important part. Not being an orator he rarely came to the fore-front in public platforms yet when he rose to speak with his feeble voice he was heard with rapt attention and great reverence. His paper was his forte. He made it one of the most powerful moulders of public opinion in the country for more than 50 years when it was under his guidance and it was to a great extent due to him and his writings that to-day it is one of the most important factors in

the Indian political and social life. There was no aspect of life in which he did not write and his articles and paragraphs which appeared in the papers from day to day though not under his name drew him nearer to the heart of the people—he felt so much for them. His contribution was voluminous and if all his writings could be collected together it would form an Encyclopædia. Though he was not an orator, speakers and orators of his time often drew their inspiration from his writings in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* which were striking in their originality and were characterised by a clearness of thought and simplicity of diction of the highest order. He was very well-informed and a master of statistics. The affairs of his country were always at his fingers' ends. Indeed he was a very popular writer and his articles were interspersed with fables adapted from Indian folklore and written in so simple a style that men with a smattering of the English tongue could understand what he was going to say. This was the secret of his success. This coupled with his sincerity of purpose made the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* the most popular paper of the day, so much so, that he was regarded towards the close of his days as the Nestor of Indian journalism.

Moti Lal's activities were not confined to the editing of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* only. He had a wide field of action and was one of the foremost of those who carried on the agitation against the Partition of Bengal and took a leading part in the making of Modern India. But we shall not describe his activities in detail on this occasion. Let it be reserved for a future one. To-day let us remember him as a writer and writer only.

In the following pages we have selected only a few of his writings, a few pebbles on the shores of the wide ocean ; but it should be clearly understood that they by no means represent the variety of subjects and the variety of manners in which he has treated them. They have been taken at random and no principle has been followed in their selection. Difficulties there have been in making a representative selection of articles and obstacles have stood in the way. We have been thinking of publishing such a volume in memory of the illustrious dead but have not been able to surmount the difficulties that have blocked the way. God willing if this venture proves a success we may publish such a volume to give the reader a true taste of the variety in the writings of the late Babu Moti Lal Ghose who is considered by many to have been one of the greatest journalists of his age.

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MOTI LAL GHOSE

Born 28th. Oct. 1847,

Died 5th Sept. 1922



## ON ROAD CESS

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Towards the end of June, 1896 a session of the Bengal Provincial Conference was held at Krishnagar.

In the report of the Conference as published in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* we find:—

Babu Motilal Ghose, Editor of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, who was received with loud and prolonged cheers moved the following resolution:—That this Conference expresses its heartfelt gratitude to Sir Alexander Mackenzie, the present Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, (a) for the deep interest which he had evinced in the matter of scarcity of water now unfortunately prevailing in many parts of Bengal, (b) for the assurance he has given to the people that the District Fund shall be relieved of the burden of maintaining Provincial Roads; (c) for further assurance that the proceeds of the Road Cess will not be devoted to the cost of maintaining dispensaries, veterinary schools, and other educational establishments and (d) for the concession which his honour has proposed to make, namely to make over the whole of the proceeds from ferries to the local bodies for purposes of water supply.



## ON ROAD CESS.

Babu Motilal while moving the resolution spoke as follows:—

The importance of the subject with which I have been entrusted cannot be over-stated. It is *the* subject before the people of Bengal just now. In one sense it is of far greater importance to us than the Suakin matter (hear, hear), for supposing that England would agree to pay the entire cost of the Indian Contingent, would that in any way relieve us of our burden? Well, never think for a moment that the Supreme Government will care to spend a pice of it for our benefit. Yes, they will never come forward to open their purse strings and help us with money for our education, sanitation and other matters which are starving for want of funds. On the other hand with the money thus saved the Simla gods will probably go on more merrily than before to carry on their wars beyond our frontiers and acquire fresh military glory for themselves; and our good friend Ameer Abdur Rahaman will fatten the more at our expense. (Laughter and cheers). Indeed, we must leave Imperial matters to the National Congress as much as possible, and confine our energies purely to matters which are within our reach and which affect us immediately. I do not of course deprecate the agitation against the Suakin matter, but what I beg to submit is that the Provincial Conferences should devote their first attention to purely local matters and then think of imperial topics. From this point of view the Road Cess and not the Suakin resolution ought to have engaged our first attention. Well, if we can

## PLÉDGES BY THE GOVERNMENT

make the Road Cess do its duties legitimately, half the misery of our people would disappear in the course of a decade or two. (Cheers).

Many of you must be familiar with the history of the imposition of the Road Cess. The land was permanently settled in Bengal and the Government could not impose any tax upon it. The Road Cess was thus a great wrong, for it was imposed in violation of the terms of the Permanent Settlement. The Duke of Argyll, the Secretary of State who imposed the tax in 1871, however tried to satisfy his own conscience and console the people of Bengal with certain solemn pledges in this connection. He appealed to the landholders of Bengal in this wise: "You want village roads, village water reservoirs, sanitation, drainage and such other improvements in your rural tracts. But the Government has no money to help you with. So, do this, and remove your wants, namely, raise a tax from amongst yourselves, and spend the proceeds for your own immediate benefit by your own agency." In short, said he, the Road Cess was no tax at all ; it was only a rate, the rate was to be levied by the cess-payers themselves, and the proceeds of the cess would be placed at their absolute disposal. The Government would not touch a pice of the cess for its own use, and the entire amount would be devoted to purposes for which the cess was to be raised. The zemindars who had raised a great outcry against the impost accepted the situation under the impression that the pledges given in such distinct and solemn manner, not by a local Governor,

nor by a Governor-General, but by the Secretary of State himself—the highest authority for India—would never be broken. Indeed, the zemindars sincerely believed that rather the sun could rise from the west than the authorities in India would venture to violate the promises, so solemnly and so distinctly given by the august representative of Her Imperial Majesty the Queen. But alas! alas! the promises were not kept, and they were broken almost from the very beginning.

One of the conditions in the Road Cess Despatch was—I shall quote the exact words of the Duke—that, “as far as possible the assent and concurrence of the rate-payers should be secured both in the levy and in the management of the rates.” Here we see that no cess can be levied without the consent of the cess-payers. But yet the cess was levied a quarter of a century ago without their consent! Of course the consent of the Cess Committee which then stood in the place of our present District Boards, was taken, but as the members of the Committees were nominated by the Collector, the Cess Committees meant the Government itself. Thus the cess was levied by the Government, and not by the cess-payers, in spite of the distinct assurance of the Secretary of State to the contrary, some twenty-five years ago; and since then we have been paying it at the rate of more than forty lakhs a year. That is to say some ten crores of rupees have been taken from us since the imposition of the cess. But where are these hoards of money, gone? Well that is the question before us.

Then we said in another capacity a few months

## WHERE DOES THE ROAD CESS MONEY GO?

ago, that the Road Cess was not legitimately spent the Lieutenant Governor got angry and said from his seat in Council that that was "a most libellous statement." That showed that His Honour possessed an excellent heart, for it was evident that an honourable and noble-hearted Englishman like Sir Alexander Mackenzie felt, and keenly felt the charge of misappropriation brought against the Government. Indeed, when I saw his remarks reported in the newspapers, I was quite sure that he would vere round and acknowledge his error when on enquiry he would be satisfied that what had been stated was absolutely true. What was expected had come to pass. Sir Alexander has not only promised that the Road Cess should not be devoted to "dispensaries, to support of schools, or to veterinary assistance", but he has held out the assurance that the District Boards should be relieved of the charge of all provincial roads. I repeat, the value of these concessions on the part of His Honour cannot be exaggerated. (Cheers).

We started with the proposition, where does the Road Cess money go? Well, the largest share of it is swallowed up by the Provincial Roads, and we shall presently show how this is done, from a quotation from a report of Mr. Stevens, who was the Collector of Nadia in 1878, and who is now the senior member of the Revenue Board. This report proves conclusively how almost the entire Road Cess money is spent upon the maintenance of the Provincial Roads which ought to be maintained by the Government.

The following is an extract from the Report of Mr.

## ON ROAD CESS

Stevens, Collector of Nadia, in 1878, to the Commissioner of the Presidency Division.

"I had occasion to report through you to Government on the subject, and I beg to remark here again that the cess can never be popular with the people unless it secures to them more direct and palpable advantages in return than it now does. The district is traversed, as it were, by a net-work of roads of different descriptions. Prior to the introduction of the Road Cess their aggregate length amounted to 642 miles, of which 159 miles were metalled and 483 miles unmetalled. Of these 12 miles metalled and 15 miles unmetalled roads are repaired by the Public Works Department at present. A good many new roads have been constructed since, and the metalling of some of the old roads extended. The total length of existing roads amounts to 749 miles at present, exclusive of village communications of which there are over 300 miles in this district. Prior to the introduction of the Road Cess, the Government spent a large sum annually, from the Provincial Funds for their renewal and maintenance. And besides this the Government used to give a separate grant varying between Rs. 40,000 and Rs. 65,000 annually for the improvement and annual maintenance and repairs of the existing unmetalled roads. These grants have been stopped now, and the Committee have hardly means at their disposal to keep these existing roads in order, much less to undertake the construction of new, though indispensable works. The result of all this is that though the people have been taxed at the maximum rate provided by the law they have benefited little by it. The public at the passing of the Road Cess Act expected that the Revenue to be derived from this source would be mostly spent in constructing new roads and bridges in accordance with requirements. I regret that the Committee in this

## CESS MONEY TO MAINTAIN VILLAGE ROADS

district by the course of things have been able to do so little in the way of fulfilling the hopes of the people in this respect."

What a boon His Honour will confer upon the country if he relieves the Board of the maintenance cost of the Provincial Roads will appear from the above report. Well, the case of the Nadia District is the case with all districts of Bengal (Hear, hear). His Honour also deserves our fervent gratitude for his assurance to make over all ferries to the District Boards. Relieved of the Provincial Roads and with the income of the ferries at their disposal, the Boards will find enough funds to remove the water difficulty and there would be thus no necessity for fresh taxation. (Cheers).

Well, the matter stands thus: The Cess money could be legitimately spent only upon village communications. Any road which is not "local" ought to be maintained by the Government. Sir George Campbell in his "Memoirs" says that he classified roads as provincial or district and local. Now, if the roads were really classified as such, it could be easily ascertained whether or not provincial roads are maintained by the Cess Funds. But if no such classified roads exist, a local or village road can be easily distinguished from a district or provincial one. A path which is used wholly by the villagers is a local road. But a road which is resorted to both by the general public and the officials of the Government must be considered as a provincial or district road. Railway feeder roads are thus provincial and not local roads.

We have faith in Sir Alexander Mackenzie. When His Honour holds out the assurance that he will

relieve the District Boards of the charge of maintaining provincial or district roads, we know he will do it. We humbly hope that he will not deviate from the noble principles embodied in the Road Cess Despatch and subsequently reiterated by Sir George Campbell. In short he will be pleased to classify the roads as Sir George did, and make the District Boards maintain only those which "affect comparatively small areas of land," that is, the village roads and local paths, and transfer the others to the hands of the Government, which as Sir George Campbell says, is bound to maintain them. If Sir Alexander Mackenzie does this bare act of justice, he will have no occasion to impose fresh taxation.

I think it my duty now to mention the services of two members of the Legislative Council in this connection during the Drainage Bill discussion. You may remember there was no talk of taxation, when the Drainage Bill was introduced ; but when the Bill came out of the Select Committee the taxation clause was tacked to it. I was very much pained to find that instead of condemning the report the Berhampur Conference voted thanks to the Select Committee. I took my friend the Hon'ble Babu Ananda Mohan Bose, who had presided over the Berhampore Conference, to task for having allowed such a suicidal resolution to be passed. He gave an explanation which did not appear to me to be satisfactory. It was, however, arranged that he should ask for a postponement of the Bill for a fortnight, till Babu Guru Prasad Sen might join the Legislative Council, and that through him an

## FIGHT IN COUNCIL

amendment was to be proposed to withdraw the measure. But where was Babu Guru Prasad then? He had not then been detailed with an "Honourable". (Laughter). He had been simply nominated as the Dacca member, but his nomination had not then been sanctioned by the India Government. It was, however, expected that he would be able to join the Council before the Bill was passed ; so, I wrote him a letter telling him that though I could not promise him a golden statue if he would oppose the Bill yet I could promise him the gratitude of the whole country. His reply was characteristic. He immediately forwarded a copy of the notice of motion which he had sent to the Government intimating his intention of opposing the Bill. On subsequent enquiry I came to learn that his notice had fallen upon Sir Charles Elliot like a bomb-shell, and that there was great commotion at Belvedere. Mr. Risley was sent for immediately by Sir Charles. Mr. Lyall who was in charge of the Bill, was not trusted; for he had no heart in the matter, and Mr. Risley was asked to prepare himself to meet Babu Guru Prasad and Mr. Ananda Mohan in the Council Chamber. There was a regular pitched battle fought over the question in the Council, the best two speeches on the occasion being delivered by Babu Guru Prasad and Mr. Ananda Mohan. The Road Cess question was thoroughly discussed, and the point clearly established that a Drainage Cess was not necessary at all, but that the work of drainage should be done with the proceeds of the Road Cess. The disappointment of Sir Charles Elliot was great indeed, for



he had not only hoped to pass the Bill, but to pass it with the full concurrence of the representative members. The result was, however, that all the representative members strongly protested against the Bill, and the Government got it passed only by a very narrow majority.

Sir Charles Elliot had, however, his revenge both upon Mr. Ananda Mohan and Babu Guru Prasad for his discomfiture. He snubbed twice Mr. Ananda Mohan and made certain reflections against Babu Guru Prasad, which our worthy Chairman has embodied in his most valuable and effective speech which we had the honour and pleasure of hearing day before yesterday. (Cheers).

Now, one general remark and I have done. In selecting Chairmen of these Conferences we should, as a rule, select Mofussil men, and such men as have done service to the millions of Bengal. From this point of view Babus Ananda Mohan and Guru Prasad are the best we have hitherto been able to secure. The service which Babu Ananda Mohan did to the masses as member of Council when the Chowkidari Bill was brought in the eighties is invaluable. The immense services of Babu Guru Prasad Sen to the country in his various capacities are too well-known to need enumeration here. I shall mention only one instance. It is through his exertions and his exertions alone that 20 lakhs of rupees annually have been saved to the poppy *raiya*s of Behar, who were raising opium revenues for Government and starving themselves. (Loud and continued cheers).

## Road Cess and Water Scarcity

In moving the Resolution relating to Road Cess and Water Scarcity in Bengal at the Bengal Provincial Conference held at Midnapur in April, 1901 Babu Moti Lal Ghose said:—

The importance of the subject cannot be overstated. Suffice it to say that if the Road Cess Fund were set free to do its legitimate duties, half the misery of the 90 per cent of the population of Bengal would vanish in the course of a few years. The fund belongs to the people, not only morally but legally also, and it is guarded by so many solemn promises, pledges and assurances that there is not a loop-hole left for the Government to meddle with it ; but, yet the authorities have been appropriating the fund to their own use from the very commencement of the levying of the cess.

In order to make the situation clear, it is necessary to give a history of the Road Cess and the different stages through which it has passed. I shall be as brief as possible. Well, there was a time when the Radical and Conservative authorities in India had a fight over the destinies of Bengal. Lord Mayo, or rather his minister, Sir John Strachey, was a Radical, at least he called himself as such. By a Radical Sir John Strachey meant that he was in favour of "active government". He did not like to move in the accustomed

groove ; he must open new spheres of action for himself. He must develop the resources of the country, pull down barriers to progress, pave the way for the introduction of all sorts of reforms, and give an impetus to every department of the State. He wanted to impose additional taxation, to decentralise finance, to spread mass education at the cost of the high, and so forth.

Sir John was opposed in Bengal by Sir William Grey, the then Lieutenant-Governor. He was, according to Sir John Strachey, a conservative official, that is to say, not in favour of what he called active Government. Sir William opposed the scheme of additional taxation, he opposed the starvation of what is called "high education", in short, he did not like the proposals put forth by Sir J. Strachey. Sir William Grey was a quiet, unambitious, unselfish and strong Governor. So long he was in Bengal he succeeded in protecting the Province from the inroads of what is called active Government. But when he had to leave the country, universally regretted by the natives of the soil, Sir John was in search of his successor, who would prove more amenable to his views. Such a man he found in Sir George Campbell. The "active Government" began in Bengal with the advent of this Lieutenant Governor, and it was then that the Road Cess was imposed. All these facts are fully narrated in the "Memoirs" of Sir George Campbell.

The difficulty about the Road Cess was the pledge that the British Government had given to the zemindars of Bengal. But it was got over under the

## ROAD CESS MONEY BELONGS TO THE PEOPLE

plea that the Road Cess would be no infringement of the terms of the Permanent Settlement, as the rate would be levied not by the Government but the people themselves. The Duke of Argyll, the then Secretary of state, was opposed to the Cess, but when hard pressed, he agreed only on one condition, namely that the proceeds would be placed at the entire disposal of the people themselves. So when the Cess was about to be imposed, the Government honestly entertained the notion that the Road Cess money belonged absolutely to those who raised it.

Indeed, those officials who think that the Road Cess Fund, like the virtue of a woman of ill fame, is a *la waresh* property, ought to read the Despatch of the Duke of Argyll carefully and see for themselves that they cannot, on any account, make that indiscriminate use of the money of the Cess-payers as they have been doing from the very beginning. Of course, the Government has a claim over all the property of the people, just as the Emperor of Morocco is said to have a claim over all the marriageable girls in his kingdom. But whether it was in a fit of generosity or political expediency,—we need not enquire which,—the British Government was graciously pleased to place the Cess Fund entirely at the disposal of the people of the country ; and so the authorities here have absolutely no right to levy or spend a pice of the impost without the permission or the consent of those who pay it.

Here is a quotation from the 25th paragraph of the Despatch :—

“That as far as possible the assent and concur-

rence of the rate-payers (cess-payers) should be secured both in the levy and in the management of the rates."

What the authorities in Bengal, however, did was to levy the cess without "the assent of the rate-payer" and then to spend it at their sweet will! Here we see that no cess can be levied without the consent of the people, but the Government ignored this provision altogether.

In paragraph 23 the Duke makes the following request to the Government of India:—

"So much (of the Cess) only should in the first instance, be raised as is required for roads."

The request of the Duke was not, however, heeded. The authorities commenced levying the cess, at the maximum rate, from the very beginning, from almost all the districts of Bengal, and thus caused the good intentions of the Home Government to be frustrated.

In paragraph 22 of the Despatch occurs the following:—

"It is above all things requisite that the benefits to be derived from the rate (Road-Cess) should be brought home to their (cess-payers) doors—that the benefit should be palpable, direct, immediate."

The Cess-payers, however, only pay the cess, but do not see the benefits—palpable or otherwise, direct or indirect, immediate or mediate. What they see, however, is that, if they make one hour's delay in the payment of the cess, their properties are sold and the amount realised. There must be hundreds of men present at this meeting who have been paying their

## TO BE SPENT FOR VILLAGES ONLY

cess for the last 25 years, but who have not as yet seen the tail of a benefit.

Here is another extract from the 23rd para of the Despatch. That, besides local roads, the proceeds of the Cess should be devoted "to the making and improving of wells, tanks and other works of irrigation, affecting comparatively small areas of land."

The above not only establishes the purely rural character of the rate, but that the Cess money should be spent for *village* roads, *village* tanks, *village* irrigations etc., and not for any other class of works. The point was subsequently made clearer by Sir George Campbell in his Proclamation. "Every pice levied under the Act," said Sir George Campbell, "will be spent . . . to improve the local roads, canals and rivers in the district for the benefit of the inhabitants." Again, "the tax shall be fairly applied to the village roads and local paths or water channels in which he (the cess-payer) is interested."

What the authorities have been doing, however, is to make the Cess Fund construct and maintain provincial or district or feeder roads, and throw other burdens upon the Cess-payers which ought to be borne by the Government.

In paragraph 23 the Duke of Argyll suggests that, "rates nominally levied for one purpose" should not "afterwards be applied to another", and insists on "the necessity of maintaining perfect openness in our dealings with the people of India, specially as regards imposts which seem to be contested". Every body

## ROAD CESS AND WATER SCARCITY

knows now that the Road Cess was imposed for some definite purposes but has been diverted almost wholly to quite different ones.

One sentence more I shall quote from the Road Cess Despatch. In paragraph 21, the Duke of Argyll lays down:

"It will certainly be desirable to carry the people along with us through their natural native leaders both in the assessment and in the expenditure of local rates."

Sir George Campbell reiterated the same assurance in still more lucid language in his proclamation in these words:—

"The Road Cess money shall be distributed and spent by local men trusted by the inhabitants who shall be selected or elected for the purpose."

What is, however, done is to cause the Road Cess to be distributed and spent by a body called the District Board which is practically an official organisation, with the Collector-Magistrate as its chairman.

It will now be plain to the meanest apprehension that both the authorities in England and India gave solemn promises in distinct terms that the Road Cess would not only be raised by the people themselves and placed absolutely at their disposal, but that every pice of it would be spent for the improvement of the rural tracts in such a way as to make the benefits plain to every one. The Zemindars had raised an outcry against the proposed impost ; but when the assurance of the proper application of the Fund came from the highest quarter possible, namely, the Secretary of State for India, and was reiterated by the Local Government, they accepted the situation without further

## VIOLATION OF PLEDGES

grumbling. Indeed, the entire country was impressed with the notion that rather might the sun rise from the west than that the authorities would violate a promise so solemnly given by the Duke of Argyll and Sir George Campbell, on behalf of the English Government.

The sun has, of course, not risen from the west, but, alas! the British rulers in India have forgotten all about the promises noted above! The correspondence that passed between Mr. Risley, the then Municipal Secretary to the Government of Bengal and Mr. R. C. Dutt, the then Commissioner of Orissa, will show how the solemn pledges of the Secretary of State and the Government of Sir George Campbell have been shattered into a shapeless mass by successive Governors. This correspondence explains how ruthlessly have the Road Cess payers been deprived of a sacred fund, which is theirs by right, both moral and legal, against all laws, human and divine, and in violation of every rule of morality and decency.

The way, it seems, was shown by Sir Ashley Eden in 1880. He and his Councillors sat together and passed a "Law". The Bengal Legislative Council was then not expanded, and it did not consequently contain a single elected representative member. The "Law" provided that the objects of the Road Cess were other than those for which it was imposed. And a number of duties were thrown upon the Road Cess Committee, which now pass by the name of District Boards. In 1885, again a further havoc was made upon the promises of the original founder of the Road



## ROAD CESS AND WATER SCARCITY

Cess, and the Cess Fund altogether abolished by another "Law". And Mr. Risley came forward to declare in 1895 that no such thing as the Road Cess Fund existed ; that, like the Famine Insurance Fund, it had been merged into a common Fund, called the District Fund ; and that this Fund might "legally" be spent on any purpose according to the sweet will of the Government.

But was it not solemnly promised by the Duke of Argyll and reiterated by Sir George Campbell that the Cess Fund belonged absolutely to those who paid the Cess? Surely, the fact cannot be ignored, for the Despatch of the Duke yet exists and so does the Proclamation of Sir George Campbell. That being the case, was it not an act of violence pure and simple, on the part of the Government, to pass what it calls a "Law" and then deprive the people of what belonged to them? Surely the Cess-payers or their representatives were never consulted nor was their sanction taken when Act IX of 1880, and the Local Self-Government Act of 1885 were passed, and the Cess Fund converted into a Government property. The thing was done in the usual way. The Government possesses the powers of legislation and it used those powers to legalize a wrong and scandal! In the same manner, the Government might pass a "Law", demolish the Permanent Settlement, and legally appropriate all the landed properties of the Zeminders of Bengal! Suppose a king with despotic powers, takes a loan of a certain amount of money from a banker with the promise of repaying the same with interest at some

## MISAPPLICATION OF CESS FUND

subsequent period. Has the king any right to make a law after the transaction to exonerate himself from the obligations to the banker? He may have the legal right to make such a law ; but would it be moral, honourable and honest on his part to resort to such a practice for the purpose of freeing himself from his solemn obligations?

What was done was this. The Government misappropriated the Cess Fund, that is to say, applied its proceeds to works the cost of which should have been met from the Imperial or Provincial Exchequer and not by the Cess-payers. In this way, it threw the burden of maintaining the Provincial and Imperial Roads as well as all medical, veterinary and other educational charges upon the Cess Fund ; it made the Cess Fund to support a large number of highly paid Public Works-men as District Engineers ; and what is more, the cost of famine was also fastened upon the Fund. And, having perpetrated all this wrong the Government sought to justify its unjustifiable doings by passing certain Acts, which are immoral on the face of them, as they had the effect of violating the solemn pledges given by the highest authority representing the Indian and the Home Government.

The Government has appropriated a large amount of Cess money to its own use in another way. The two cesses, the Road and the Public Works, are collected by one and the same establishment. The Road Cess belongs to the people and the Public Works Cess is claimed by the Government. The joint collection charges should, therefore, be borne equally

by the Government and the District Boards. But the Government, in its plenitude of power, arranged that the District Boards should pay two-thirds, and the Public Works Department only one-third, of the collection charge. Nor is this all. Though the Government accepted the principle of paying one-third of the cost, yet it did not act up to its own promise. The result is that according to its own admission, the Government owes the Cess-payers nearly seven lakhs of Rupees as pointed out the other day, by my esteemed friend the Hon'ble Mr. A. M. Bose in the Council with regard to this one item only. But the Government should pay one-half and not one-third of the collection charges ; and so the Government's debt in this connection would amount to something like twelve or thirteen lakhs of Rupees with interest.

Let us summarise. The Road Cess was imposed with a solemn promise that every pice of its proceeds would be applied to local purposes—"to the direct, immediate, and palpable benefits of the Cess-payers," namely, to the village roads, the village tanks and wells, the village irrigation, and other works of similar character ; but, what we find is that the Cess Fund is being swallowed up by

- (1) Imperial and Provincial Roads ;
- (2) Highly paid District Engineers ;
- (3) Famine Charges ;
- (4) Medical Charges ;
- (5) Veterinary and other Educational Charges ;
- (6) And some other minor charges.

Besides, the Government has taken from the Cess Fund

## HOW WATER SCARCITY CAN BE REMOVED

seven lakhs of Rupees according to its own showing and something like 12 lakhs according to the calculation of the people, in connection with the establishment charges.

Need anybody now wonder why is there a widespread water-famine or water-scarcity every year in the Province, and why do millions of people drink foul water, and why cholera and malarial fever decimate thousands of villages every year? I need not dilate upon the untold sufferings to which people are annually subjected for at least three months on account of water famine; that task will be performed by the gentleman who will follow me. All that I need say, without fear of contradiction, is that what tens of thousands of people drink is simply poison and they have to fetch this poison in many cases, from a distance of five to six miles. It is a wonder that many tracts of Bengal have not been ~~totally~~ depopulated under these terrible circumstances. Now, the only way to remove the water difficulty is to relieve the Road Cess Fund of all the illegitimate duties thrown upon it and devote the major portion of the Cess money to the supply of drinking water. Sir Alexander Mackenzie was good enough to give the undertaking that not only would the District Fund be relieved of the burden of maintaining the Provincial Roads and that the Cess money would not be devoted to the cost of maintaining dispensaries, veterinary schools and other educational establishments, but conceded that the whole of the proceeds from ferries to the local bodies should be made over for purposes of water-supply. We should

approach our good Lieutenant-Governor with the prayer that he should be pleased to redeem the assurances of his predecessor. To save Bengal from pestilence and disease, the people must first be supplied with good drinking water. This is *the most important* problem before the Government. Government can wait for other works of utility ; *water famine cannot*. And yet the heartless reply was given in the Council that people must provide for their own water.

The question of water scarcity was also raised during the rule of the predecessor of the present ruler of Bengal, and Sir Alexander Mackenzie adopted a more pleasant way of meeting the clamour of the people for drinking water. He said in his water scarcity circular that zemindars must dig tanks for poorer people, and the poorer people should give their free labour for such sacred purposes for a meal only, and His Honor promised ever-lasting happiness to those who would listen to his advice. But then, as in the case of the Famine Insurance Fund, the people were absolved from some of their duties which previously they had to do. "Pay the Cess and we shall see that all your local needs such as drinking water, roads, irrigation etc., are supplied with," declared the Government in the most solemn manner possible. The Cess was paid and the Government had no right to step in and appeal to the pious feelings of the people. "Pay the Cess," said the Government, and "we, in return, would furnish you with a maund of advantages." The Cess was paid but the Government demurred that a maund was too much, the people should be satisfied

## THE NEEDY MAN'S PROMISE

with a seer only. It was thus the Fund was absorbed. The Government came forward again and said that it could not possibly give a seer, let the people have a chattak. And now we are told that the people must dig their own tanks and wells. This reminds us of the needy man who had made a promise to goddess Kali. The story is told in poetry by Babu Sisir Kumar Ghose in the "Indian Sketches." Here it is:—

Low at the Goddess Kalee's shrine  
His knee a zealot bent,  
And in a fit of holy zeal,  
From Heaven but rarely sent,

He vowed that chosen from his herds,  
With all convenient speed,  
The lordliest of the buffalo bulls,  
~~Should in~~ her honour bleed.

The Goddess hailed with glad assent  
This tribute to her fame,  
And waited longingly and long  
The gift that never came.

Before her feet with streaming tears  
The devout fell again,  
Told her of drought and failing crops,  
Of toil, and want, and pain.

And Kalee, pity-touched, decreed  
That he his vow should keep,

## ROAD CESS AND WATER SCARCITY

But in lieu of lordly buffalo,  
Might sacrifice a sheep.

Drying tears, the man went forth,  
And vainly strove to find,  
Among his fat and thriving flock,  
One halt, or lean, or blind.

The hours glide by, day follows day,  
And when the Goddess chid,  
He strove to still her lawful ire,  
By promising a kid.

For her, and her alone, should be  
The first that came to hand.  
He had not counted, first would come  
The fattest of his band.

So time went on, and once again  
Before her he appears,  
Lies prostrate at great Kalee's feet,  
And bathes them with his tears,

"Goddess, look down and pity me,  
My children cry for bread ;  
A kid is much ; deign to accept  
A grass-hopper instead".

"Well, be it so," the Goddess said,  
In deep disgust and pain ;  
And rendered bolder by her words  
The zealot spoke again.

“Lady”, he said, “to catch you one  
Would cost me time and trouble,  
Stretch out your hand in yonder field,  
And take them from the stubble.”

Thus India, to thy prayer at last  
A gracious ear is lent,  
Not buffalo, sheep, or kid is here,  
But grass-hoppers are sent.

• So when the Road Cess was imposed, we were promised, with a flourish of trumpets, “the lordliest of the buffalo bulls”, but Mr. Baker would have us now catch grass-hoppers at our own cost and trouble. He might have also, following the example of Sir Alexander Mackenzie, promised ever-lasting happiness to those who would dig tanks and sink wells and quoted texts from our *shastras* in support of his pious proposition.

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## KRISHNAGAR SPEECH

Following is the Full text of the Presidential Address of Babu Moti Lal Ghose delivered at the Bengal Provincial Conference at Krishnagar in April, 1915:—

Friends and Brother Delegates:

I deeply appreciate the honour you have done me by asking me to preside over the deliberations of the present session of the Bengal Provincial Conference, but I must tell you frankly that the responsibility of the position appals me. If three score years and ten be the average limit of human life, I am fifteen annas on the other world and only one anna on this. Advanced in years and shattered in health, I feel the task almost beyond my capacity. If yet I stand before you to-day as your President, it is partly because of your love and affection for me, and partly in obedience to the call of duty. I shall, however, do my humble best, though I am afraid I shall prove myself a disappointment. Indeed the solution of the great problem as to how to raise our depressed people is beset with so many and so stupendous difficulties that I really do not know what to say on the subject.

## A NON-PARTY ORGANIZATION.

Gentlemen, in one respect we can congratulate ourselves—we in Bengal have no division amongst us so far as our Provincial Conference is concerned. We are neither “Conventionists” nor “non-Conventionists” ; “Moderates” and “Extremists” are terms unknown to us: we have to sign no creed or dogma to prove our faith and patriotism ; we are all Nationalists and Loyalists, and, generally speaking, *ek-dil* (of one mind) in regard to the public affairs of our motherland. Any respectable person of 21 who is duly elected as a delegate by a recognised association or at a public meeting has the privilege of attending our Conference and taking part in its proceedings. Our Conference has, therefore, no sectional element in it—it represents the views and sentiments of the entire Bengali people on public matters. This is a great advantage. For I need hardly point out that a house divided against itself is bound to fall in the end.

## THE CURSE OF THE COUNTRY.

That illustrious journalist, the late Mr. William Stead, once made the following reflection in his “Review of Reviews”: “European domination in India came into existence because the Indians were hopelessly divided among themselves, and every demonstration of the ineradicable tendency of the Indians to quarrel among themselves will be taken by the outside world as a proof that foreign domination is indispensable.” Who can deny, as pointed out above, that internecine quarrels have been the ruin of India?

But why do we quarrel amongst ourselves? Land disputes often occur among our illiterate agriculturists who now and then commit riots and break one another's heads. We can understand this, as the possession or the loss of even an acre of land means life or death to a starving peasant in a poor country like ours. But why should our public men entertain a rancorous feeling for one another and create mutual dissensions for nothing passes my comprehension.

In free countries rivals fight political battles in order to secure ruling authority. Here we have no such object to gain by our mutual recriminations ; for, we have practically no sovereign powers to hope and fight for. In free countries, again, political leadership carries substantial weight and dignity with it. Here, however, beyond the clapping of hands or perhaps the dragging of his carriage by students, such as might please a child but surely not a man of ~~mature~~ years, a leader expects very little. Why should we then injure the vital interests of the nation by adopting the suicidal course of dividing ourselves into parties and falling foul of each other? Ponder, then, on the appalling situation of the country. Should people quarrel amongst themselves when their house is on fire? As Mr. Stead reminds us, but for these internecine quarrels the Indians would not have come under any foreign yoke at all.

### PUTTING OUR HOUSE IN ORDER.

Our first work is to devise a plan whereby we can put our own house in order. We all know how our Con-

## PUTTING OUR HOUSE IN ORDER

gresses, Leagues and Conferences are conducted. What the promoters of these organisations generally do is to sit in deliberation once in the course of a year, to take stock of the present state of the country, and make speeches and pass resolutions. Possessing no political authority either to remedy a defect or to supply a deficiency, the conclusions they arrive at do not count for much. They have to submit the outcome of their deliberations to the rulers of the land for their kind consideration. They can, however, take no action to compel the latter to pay proper attention to their decisions. Knowing this very well, our rulers more often than not pass them over in silence or contempt. Are we then to continue this method or replace it by a more practical one? That is the momentous question which the assembled delegates on the present occasion will have to settle. Dogs bark to draw attention, and, when no heed is paid to their appeal, they of necessity give up barking—that is what their animal instincts teach them.

There are mainly two ways open to us to improve our conditions: one is by political agitation, and the other by self-reliance. We might have eschewed political agitation altogether if we had any real authority in our hands. But as all power has been monopolised by the Government, we find it impossible to get on without a large amount of official help. Political agitation is thus a dire necessity with us, and it must be kept up. But our main efforts should be directed in putting our own house in order. That is a work which is far more important than political agitation,

and it ought to be taken up in all seriousness for the very existence of the nation.

### EVILS OF OUR OWN MAKING.

First of all, many of our wants and grievances are of our own making. It is quite within our power to remove them without official assistance. Thus, one of our complaints is that the Government policy indirectly encourages the vice of drinking by various means. The remedy is in the hands of the people. If they do not drink, the authorities cannot compel them to do so. Another complaint is that foreign manufactures are ruining indigenous industries. Well, the remedy is, to avoid as many articles manufactured in other countries as possible. There is yet another great evil. There is no doubt that litigation is eating into the vitals of the nation. But why do you resort to law? Settle your disputes among yourselves and the evil will die of itself.

The Police in this country are oftentimes oppressive ; many Magistrates and Judges very convicting ; the criminal laws unduly severe ; punishment generally excessive ; and even the highest judicial court is under Executive influence to a considerable extent. But if we do not quarrel amongst ourselves, neither the Police nor the Magistrate nor the Sessions Judge will be able to touch a hair of our head, nor shall we have anything to do with the High Court. Even when we have any unavoidable disputes among ourselves, we can avoid courts of law by settling most of them by arbitration. In this way, not only are a large number

## HOW WE CAN BE FREE

of our grievances preventable, but we are quite able to remove them ourselves.

## HOW WE CAN PRACTICALLY BE FREE.

As a matter of fact, we can secure almost our full personal liberty only by giving up litigation and foreign goods. When we are at home, we are as free as Englishmen themselves. But the moment we enter the precincts of a court house, we feel that we are in a different environment and we are breathing a different atmosphere. It is then that we are reminded of our utter helplessness and also of the lordly majesty of the Judge, the Magistrate, the Police officers, nay, even of the constable and the peon, armed as they all are with more or less of punitive power. Indeed, the paraphernalia of the courts and offices are bound to produce a most chilling and emasculating effect even upon the stoutest heart. Why should we seek these demoralizing influences when we can avoid many of them by care and prudence? Similarly, on no occasion should we feel our worthlessness more acutely than when we have to use an article of foreign manufacture. What could be more humiliating than that we should have to go naked and eat our food without salt if Manchester were to cease sending us her cloths and Liverpool her salt?

## WHERE IS THE GOOD SAMARITAN?

A very large number of our people also suffer from their own ignorance as well as from the apathy of the State. The agriculturists form the bulk of our

population, but they have no knowledge as to how to improve agriculture. Our artizan and manufacturing classes are dying fast. Why? Because they have no idea as to how to maintain the old, and revive or develop the new arts and industries. Then, thousands of people die from diseases which they bring upon themselves by violating the ordinary laws of sanitation and hygiene. By simply explaining these laws to them, many of them may be saved from untimely death. They are all anxious to improve their own condition, but they have very few friends in the world to lead them to a life of health and prosperity.

How often do our people purposelessly cut one another's throats and pay the penalty of their own folly? Zemindars quarrel with Zemindars, ryots with ryots, Zemindars with ryots ; nay, even patriots quarrel with one another ; villagers have their internal and interminable feuds ; brothers and friends break each other's heads. These internecine disputes are bringing untold miseries in the land. Where is the good Samaritan to point out to them a better way of dealing with themselves and their neighbours? In Christian countries, people have at least their pastors to go to, but here they have none to give them a good advice or lend them a helping hand. Let the assembled leaders at Krishnagar put their heads together and show the way for the real regeneration of the country.

### **A PLAN OF WORK.**

I will now sketch out a simple plan for the Provincial Conference to adopt as an experimental measure

## A PLAN OF WORK

for putting our house in order. Let a Central Committee, composed of one or more representatives of each district with about 25 or 30 leading men from Calcutta, be formed to look after the affairs of the Province. We have already got the nucleus of such a Committee. Let the first work of the Committee be to appoint one or two paid agents in each district. Let these agents be either under the control of the Central Committee, which must be located at Calcutta, or under district or local committees.

It should be distinctly borne in mind that no good work could be done without an able paid agent. Great care should be taken in selecting the agent, for much would depend upon his tact, judgment, and patriotism ; and he should therefore be a capable man with a respectable salary. Of course each district must pay for its own agent, and the Central Committee must undertake to incur the expenses of maintaining an effective supervision over the work of this mufasil agency.

### THE AGENT'S DUTIES.

Let the agent go into the interior to look after the needs and grievances of the masses in his district, and suggest remedies to remove or redress them. His duties will be naturally of a varied character. He should commence his work by communicating with the leading men of the district and seeking their co-operation. He should be able to secure the sympathy and support of the majority of them ; and when he fails to gain the co-operation of any particular leader or



person, he should go to the length of sitting in "Dhanna" if necessary in his place to rouse him to his sense of duty. And, above all, he must keep himself in touch with the Central Committee. In short, while he should watch over the wants and grievances of his own district, he should at the same time keep the members of the Central Committee informed of his doings, and invoke their aid if and when necessary.

Here are some specific works for the agent. Let him form village Committees for the purpose of giving up the use of articles of foreign make. Let him form a league in every central place for preaching peace and good will, and dissuading people from quarrelling among themselves and going to law. Let him form arbitration courts in all important villages in his district, and make their inhabitants realise the wisdom and expediency of settling their disputes out of court.

Then again, let the agent urge the necessity of introducing new industries; let him also teach the people the laws of sanitation. Many people are so ignorant as not to know that the water they drink is oftentimes as deadly as poison itself. Let him, again, play the role of peace-maker. If he finds the feeling between Hindus and Mussalmans bitter, let him, with folded hands, appeal to both to forgive and to forget, and live as good friends in peace and amity for their mutual benefit.

It should be distinctly understood that the agent must on no account come into collision with the district authorities. Nay, it should be his duty to make friends with such of them as are sympathetic and friendly. He

## POLITICAL AGITATION

may keep the latter and the newspapers informed of what is going on in the district. Let him warn the public against a water or food scarcity when one is apprehended ; let him report a disaster when one has occurred in any part of the district ; let him expose wrong doings, official and non-official, without any distinction ; and if he can accomplish a title of what lies in his power to do, he can not only bring comfort and happiness to tens of thousands but secure an honest living for himself and make his services worth the pay that he is expected to draw from his district.

## POLITICAL AGITATION.

As regards political agitation, the agent should be instructed to hold public meetings occasionally at important centres in the district. In this way, political education should be imparted to the masses. If only half a dozen advanced districts of Bengal will follow this method, then an organisation may be formed in the country in regard to which it will not be possible for the Government to adopt the present policy of contemptuous derision. If the Government do not now pay any heed to the deliberations of the Congresses, Leagues and Conferences, it is because these organisations are more artificial than real—they are spasmodic and not persistent in their efforts. But if we can rouse the feeling of the nation effectively the Government will be bound to pay that respect for the deliberations of the leaders of the country which it now withholds. It is then only we shall be able to compel

the attention of the Government to our wishes when we have formed ourselves into a united people, and secured a united national voice.

### NATIONALISM.

Gentlemen, now that the feeling of nationality has dawned on the minds of our educated classes, for which we are deeply grateful to our present rulers, it is our paramount duty to adopt all legitimate means to nourish and promote this sacred feeling. That is the first step towards the building up of a nation. Nationality is a vital principle, and unless people realized the value of national spirit it would be a hopeless struggle for them to grow and get on. I believe, there is not one educated Bengalee who is not saturated with a feeling of nationality, and there is scarcely a part of India where the wave of this national spirit has not struck.

Thus, one of the first duties of the leaders of the country is to further develop this national feeling, harness it, and then employ it in the service of the motherland. It means the employment of a number of missionaries in every district to preach Swadeshi or nationalism and induce the people to cultivate the spirit of a discriminating patriotism. Their main object should be to teach the people to readjust their domestic life, to give up the use of foreign articles and take to their indigenous substitutes, to revive industries and improve agriculture, to check the evils of litigation, and to impart education, general and technical, on national lines.

## **, A PROGRAMME OF WORK**

In short, let each district carry out the following programme of work:—

(1) The spread of Swadeshi or national feeling ; the purchase of India-made things even at a sacrifice ; the encouragement and development of indigenous home industries and agricultural reforms.

(2) Education of the masses by pamphlets, speeches and conferences.

(3) The arrest and termination, as far as possible, of internecine quarrels by arbitration courts as well as by the efforts of missionaries, honorary or paid, appointed for the purpose of preaching nationalism.

(4) Education, both general and technical, on national lines, as far as that is possible.

(5) Sanitation.

(6) Instructions for economical living.

(7) Possible social reforms.

(8) Promotion of good feelings between Hindus and Mussalmans.

## **BACK TO THE LIFE OF OUR ANCESTORS.**

It is now quite plain that we have enough of work which we ourselves can do, without requiring any help from the rulers, and which, if accomplished, will practically secure the well-being of the body-politic under British domination. It must not be forgotten that there is not one among all these works which is beyond our reach or which was not achieved by our ancestors. Our forbears laboured under one great disadvantage—their sphere of activity was confined within the four corners of their native village ; but ours

## HOW OUR ANCESTORS LIVED

is of a more extended nature, and hence it is quite possible for us to build a united nation.

Litigation was unknown among our ancestors ; why should we not then be able to at least minimise, if not altogether remove, its disastrous effects? If we are satisfied with the humble tenour of our life, we can do away with the necessity of depending upon foreign articles. Our people once controlled the yarn industry of the country by the universal use of the "charka" in every house, rich or poor. Not many generations ago, we made our own metallic utensils and vessels ; we made our own bangles ; we made our own *goor* and salt: why should we not be able to do all these and many other things again?

## ECONOMICAL LIVING.

As regards economical living, well, our forefathers, with the income of their small holdings, not only led an independent life, but a life of ease and comfort. What our fathers did fifty years ago, ought to be possible for us to do to-day. They held no Government appointments, yet they had competence ; and they were happy and contented because they knew how to lead an economical and healthy life. Let most of our educated men follow in the wake of their ancestors, and then they will have no need to enter into any service at all which inevitably brings in its train a sure degeneration of many of our moral and social virtues.

In short, for the regeneration of the country we must live a simple life and rely mainly on our own

## GIVE UP LUXURY

resources and exertions, which means that we must nationalise our mode of life as thoroughly as possible. Why do we use costly coats, boots and sometimes hats, when our forefathers, though shoeless, coatless and hatless, were far more healthy and robust than we are? Luxury does not suit a poor and starving people. Similarly, we must nationalise all other important concerns of our domestic life,—educational, industrial, sanitary and social. Let each district employ, by turn, only half a dozen persons for six months in the year, to preach Swadeshi and do the works enumerated above ; and in five years sufficient result will be forthcoming to fill the nation with hope and vigour. Surely there is nothing impracticable about my scheme ; there is thus absolutely no cause for despair. On the other hand, the nation is bound to make solid progress if the leaders proceed to work on the lines indicated above with a stout heart. And may God bless their noble work!

## OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS GOVERNMENT.

As stated above, we cannot do without political agitation. But what should be the attitude of our public men carrying on such agitation towards the ruling authorities? The late Lord Randolph Churchill's policy, when in the House of Commons, was to oppose the Liberal Ministry all along the line—to oppose it when it did a bad thing and to oppose it when it did a good thing. Of course no one can advocate this unreasonable attitude. The method advocated by one section of our leaders is, "Rather

co-operation with, than opposition to, Government." There would be no objection to this arrangement if by such co-operation we could always serve the interests of the people and not of the officials. Acting on this principle some of our leaders in the Supreme Council, including even the late lamented Mr. Gokhale, supported the Press Gagging Act of 1910, barring only Babu Bhupendra Nath Bose and Pandit Madan Mohan Malavya when Lord Minto appealed to them for co-operation. There is no doubt that by following this method many of our worthy public men are emasculating themselves and playing into the hands of "unsympathetic officials. In my humble judgment the policy inaugurated by such stalwarts as Messrs. Hume, Dadabhai Naoroji, W. C. Bonnerjee etc., namely, constitutional opposition as a rule, and co-operation only when beneficial to the best interests of the country, is the best for us.

### WHAT SIR C. C. STEVENS SUGGESTED.

It would no doubt be an agreeable surprise to you, gentlemen, to learn that this very policy was deliberately suggested by no less an authority than a distinguished civilian administrator like the late Sir C. C. Stevens. While he officiated as Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal in 1895, a number of Marhatta papers were prosecuted for sedition by the Government of Bombay for opposing its plague regulations and severely punished. This led the then Press Association of Bengal to approach Sir Charles with the request that he would be pleased to declare the policy which should guide the Indian

papers. As Collector of the 24-Parganas he had already expressed his views on the subject ; and he was, therefore, specially requested to state whether he, as ruler of the province, still stuck to those views. Here is his remarkable reply to the representation of the Press Association which would no doubt be read with profound interest and profit:—

“Mr. Stevens has read with much interest your allusion to the opinions which he expressed as Magistrate-Collector of the 24-Parganas so far back as the year 1884. As these opinions have now gained an importance which was little contemplated at the time when they were written, it is desirable that they should be reproduced in full. They were as follows:—

“ ‘The position of the Native Press must necessarily be peculiar. It must, from the nature of things, be always in opposition. If we found a Native paper constantly expatiating on the blessings of English rule, on the unmixed advantages of western civilization, and on the administrative and private virtues of English officials, we think we should not respect the editor or his staff the more for it. We should think him a hypocrite who was playing what he considered to be a paying game, and we should look to see what reward he might obtain. Such a newspaper would neither interest, nor be respected by Native or European readers. We must, therefore, look to Native writers for criticism of Government measures and of Government servants ; and it must not be a matter of surprise if we find them advocating Native interests and seeking fields for Native ambition. This being so, I think that all we have to expect of the Native Press is that it shall discharge the duties of an opposition honestly and with moderation ; that it shall refrain from malicious attacks ; that it shall not strain facts or arguments in support of foregone conclusions ; that



it shall not throw itself open to be used for purposes of private revenge, and that care shall be taken to ascertain and to report the truth.'

"Of the sentiments expressed in the above extract, there is nothing which Mr. Stevens desires now to withdraw or to modify: as in 1884, so in the present day, he considers that due regard should be had to the position of the Native Press and to the circumstances under which it is conducted, and that there should be reasonable latitude of criticism both of Government measures and of the acts of Government servants. At the same time he holds firmly that these concessions are only compatible with a desire on the part of the writers to be accurate and just, helpful to the Government and fair to individuals."

#### OPPOSITION-CUM-CO-OPERATION.

I need not dilate further on the subject. Our public bodies are in the position of the Indian press. They should be, therefore, according to Sir C. C. Stevens, "always in opposition." Nay more. They should guard themselves against constantly expatiating on the blessings of English rule etc., otherwise they would not be respected but regarded as "hypocrites". At the same time they must discharge the duties of an opposition honestly and without malice. These are the views of a distinguished Anglo-Indian administrator, and no one can dispute their soundness. In other words, "Opposition-cum-Co-operation" and not "Co-operation-Cum-Opposition" should be the attitude of our public organisations in relation to the ruling authorities, when they have to deal with public questions, in the interests of both the rulers and the ruled.

## THE PAST AND THE PRESENT.

I shall now pass on to the important question of what we have been in the past and what we are at present. Have you, my young friends, any idea of what Bengal was 60 or 70 years ago? There were then very few towns and municipalities in the Province. The pick of the nation lived in rural areas. The result was that the bulk of the villages were furnished with all the necessities of civilized life. They had an excellent system of drainage ; and each of them possessed at least half a dozen tanks, one or more of which were reserved for drinking purposes, unless the village stood on a flowing river. No people were more cleanly ; they rubbed their bodies with mustard oil and bathed at least once during the day. They lived in well-ventilated houses, facing the south as a rule, and having large compounds. They had their disinfectants in cow-dung. Fields were specially set apart, far from human habitation, for latrine purposes. The people had thus pretty good knowledge of hygienic laws.

They had abundance of food, and had good appetite. There was scarcely a family, however poor, who had not one or more milch cows. Rivers, channels, khals, tanks and ponds abounded in fish. There was a pasturage and a village common attached to every populated locality. Fruits were plentiful and so were fresh vegetables. Rice used to sell at an incredibly low price and all kinds of cereals were also very cheap.

Villages in those days thus teemed with healthy, happy and robust people, who spent their days in

manly sports—in wrestling and playing lathis and swords ; in swimming and climbing up tall trees ; in riding and running, not troubled by the bread question or the fear of being visited by any deadly pestilence or any emissaries of the C. I. D. In short, the people could in those days nourish their bodies properly with wholesome food and pure drinking water ; they could keep their villages dry by natural drainage ; they had not to struggle hard for their bread ; they had enough of cattle and unsilted-up waterways to furnish them with such nourishing food as milk and fish. They had also several other advantages which we do not possess now, with the result that they were able to enjoy an idyllic life six or seven decades ago, which has passed beyond our wildest dreams to-day.

## THE AWFUL DETERIORATION OF THE RACE.

The deterioration of the race began with the outbreak of a kind of fever in an epidemic form in the sixties of the last century, which was known as the "Epidemic" or "Burdwan fever" and which has now been correctly defined as Malaria and spread not only in every part of this province but all over India. This disease has swept away tens of millions of people from Bengal during the last 60 years. Those who have been left behind and spared, generally speaking, are more dead than alive. Enter to-day a malaria-stricken village of the best type and the silent homesteads and the dilapidated houses—many of them originally palatial buildings but now abodes of jackals, leopards and poisonous reptiles—will proclaim the sad fact that it was

## WILL BENGALLEES DISAPPEAR?

at one time inhabited by a prosperous, happy and contented population. It is desolation now from one end of the village to the other!

### THE DISMAL FUTURE BEFORE US.

Is it possible that the Bengalees will ultimately disappear like the old Greeks who fell a prey to the scourge of malaria? God forbid it. The very idea is shocking. All the same, it seems pretty clear that unless vigorous steps of the right sort are promptly taken, our race is doomed. The latest official estimate of average annual deaths from malaria in India in ordinary years is 1,300,000. It has also been officially admitted that even in such of the foremost districts in Bengal as Nadia, Jessore, Berhampur, Rajshye, etc., not only has the population decreased but, as a rule, the death-rate is above the birth-rate. This must be the inevitable result, for, it is not possible for a malaria-stricken people, many of them mere skeletons, almost bent down with the weight of their spleens and livers, to grow and multiply. In Nadia, where we are holding our Conference this year, eighty thousand people died from malarial and other fevers in the preceding year, that is, fifty in a thousand, or one in twenty, of whom twenty-four thousands passed away in the last two months of November and December? Here is a startling object-lesson, indeed.

### TERRIBLE ECONOMIC LOSS.

It should not also be forgotten that the increase of malaria is an economic calamity which robs a country

of its most precious source of wealth. Celli, the distinguished Italian medical authority, sums up briefly and to the point: "Malaria annually costs Italy incalculable treasure." One of the most dangerous effects of malaria is that it makes the people quite unfit for all bodily or mental toil. Laziness and lack of enterprise being thus the marked characteristics of the unfortunate victims of malaria, each generation, as it is born, is subjected not only to the same physical surroundings as its predecessors were, but also to an unhealthy moral atmosphere.

### THE PRESENT SITUATION.

We have seen above what an average village was like in the pre-epidemic days of the sixties of the last century. But what is it now? "The thick jungle ; the large number of tanks, pits and surface collections of water ; the bad drinking water-supply ; the promiscuous defecation ; the water-logging of the soil, owing to imperfect drainage etc," to quote from the Bengal Drainage Committee's report, (1906), characterise a Bengal village of the present day.

The description is far from complete. There is no longer a sufficiency of healthy food and pure drinking water to nourish and sustain the villagers and enable them to avoid the germs of epidemics. Food is scarce, and healthy food absolutely rare. Where are our cattle? Almost all gone! And cow's milk, butter and 'ghee' have also disappeared with them. They cannot be had now, in any appreciable quantity and in a wholesome condition, for love or for money. The water

## FILTHY BENGAL OF TO-DAY

which millions of rural people drink to-day is something like diluted mud. Almost every village is full of noxious jungle and rank vegetation and saturated with subsoil dampness.

Thus the condition of things that existed in Bengal six decades ago has been completely reversed. Water is not now, as before, drained away at the end of floods or rains by reason of obstruction to our natural drainage. The thick and interminable jungle, by standing in the way of ventilation and delaying evaporation, keeps the surface of the ground damper than would otherwise be the case. The general filth surrounding the Bengallee homesteads in the villages to-day was unknown before and now poisons the air and contaminates the sources of our water-supply which is getting scantier year after year: while bad drinking water induces bowel complaints and general debility, which, again, makes the system susceptible to malarial attacks. Need any body wonder now why malaria and cholera have established themselves so firmly and been committing such havoc in this country?

### POVERTY AND DEFECTIVE DRAINAGE

I need hardly say why I have dwelt, at some considerable length, on this subject, even at the risk of boring you. The very existence of the nation and the Empire rests on the solution of the malaria problem. The improvement of village sanitation, therefore, demands the first consideration of the people and the authorities. Our towns and municipalities are also the abodes of malaria and other deadly diseases, and their

sanitary condition too should seriously engage the attention of all, specially as the pick of the nation now resides within their limits. As a layman, it is beyond my province to dogmatise on the origin of malaria ; but all medical and sanitary authorities are agreed that poverty is one of the main causes, and defective drainage one of the immediate or exciting causes, of this terrible pestilence. Poverty keeps the people under-fed, ill-clothed and ill-housed with the result that their physical system is weakened and undermined ; the power to resist malaria disappears with their health. A recent Government Medical Report expresses this view in very pithy language: "Fever is a euphemism for insufficient food, scanty clothing and unfit dwelling." The dampness of the soil, caused by bad drainage, again, produces malarious germs and those residing in water-logged places easily fall victims to them. The remedial measures against this scourge, therefore, are not the mosquito brigade and the distribution of quinine but the improvement of the economic condition of the people so that they may feed, clothe and house themselves better and remove all obstructions to drainage and other insanitary surroundings.

### OTHER TESTIMONIES.

Malaria prevails to a large extent in the Malay States. Mr. F. D. Evans, Engineer to the Malaria Advisory Board of these States, read a paper, on February 9th last, before the London Institute of Civil Engineers, in the course of which he said that Malaria had been greatly reduced there "by drying land

through drainage." The London "Times" thereupon remarked in a leading article:

"Drainage is the most radical method of dealing with Malaria. Its efficacy was known of old ages before the cause was understood: the city of Rome is the classical example."

It proceeded on to say:

"Colonel Gorgas has declared as the result of his experience (in connection with Panama Canal) that a farmer can go anywhere in tropical countries and free himself from Malaria by draining the ground and clearing away the bush near his house. In the Malay States it has been most thoroughly carried out at Kaula Lumpur where the Malaria death rate fell from an average of 908 per thousand before the appointment of the Medical Advisory Board to 4.2 in 1913. The sickness rate for Indian recruits at the police depot has been reduced from 439 in 1910 to 88 in 1914."

Yes, good drainage is *the* thing needed. The history of Malaria in Bengal is a history of bad and obstructed drainage. That defective drainage is a prime factor in the causation of Malaria was discovered almost immediately after the historical outbreak of the "Epidemic Fever" in 1860. The discoverer was the late Raja Digambar Mitra who was the only Indian member of the Epidemic Fevers Commission which was appointed by the Government of Bengal in 1864 to enquire into the origin of the terrible pestilence and suggest remedies. At first the European members (all medical men) disputed the correctness of the theory, but they accepted it afterwards and unanimously held that, "to effect this object (to reduce the moisture of the soil) the obvious course is to improve the drainage of the country



obstructed by the silting up of rivers and 'Khals' and the general assimilation of levels which have gradually taken place of late years. Remembering that the direction of the natural drainage of the villages situated along the river banks is inland, we have no difficulty in believing that it is impeded by the Railway embankments on both sides."

This was said more than fifty years ago by a competent body of experts after a close enquiry of several months. If the recommendation of the Commission had been carried out immediately, or even twenty years after, Malaria might have been expelled from Bengal, and other provinces saved from its deadly devastation.

### RURAL DRAINAGE.

In pre-malaria days the drainage of all villages in lower Bengal was effected by the water first running into the nearest paddy fields and thence collecting in the 'beels,' from which it rushed through 'Khals' and canals into larger streams which, again, communicated with many navigable rivers. All this is practically a thing of the past. What we see now is that not only Railway but other embankments, as well as raised roads also, obstruct the natural free passage of water. The inevitable result is the waterlogged condition of the villages which is a fruitful source of Malaria. This might have been avoided to a large extent if there had been more culverts with larger openings in railway and protective embankments. So the remedial measure is to make it obligatory on Railway Companies and the Public Works Department to increase the number of

## SCANTY WATER SUPPLY

culverts and their width, and thereby remove the obstructions to the free passage of water.

## OTHER SANITARY IMPROVEMENTS.

Now, not only should the villages be drained and rendered as dry as possible by removing all obstacles that stand in the way of the free egress of water, but they require many other sanitary improvements such as the lowering of the sub-soil water, the clearance of thick jungles, the filling up of useless tanks or ponds, and the supply of good drinking water.

## WATER SUPPLY.

The supply of pure water is also a dire necessity to make Bengal villages healthy. The bulk of them annually present a heart-rending spectacle the like of which is perhaps to be witnessed nowhere in the world. Fancy myriads of people, during the hottest season of the year, have to drink not water but what may be more properly called diluted mud ; and many of them have to fetch this stuff from a distance of one, two or three miles. The result is deadly cholera, diarrhœa or dysentery, to which tens of thousands of villagers unconsciously fall victims. Dirty water, again, creates mosquitoes, and thus indirectly brings about malaria. Previously rivers, streams, channels and tanks supplied the rural population with wholesome drinking water, but they are now silted or choked up, and hence the abnormal dearth of water. Barring those villages which are on river banks, every one of them

needs at least three tanks to keep its inhabitants in some state of health and comfort, namely, one for drinking, one for bathing and washing, and one for jute-steeping purposes.

### SANITATION FIRST, EDUCATION AFTERWARDS.

I do not draw upon my imagination when I say that the Bengali race is bound to disappear if our villages are not made habitable and healthy. This is no doubt a terrible future, but the situation must be boldly faced and the race rescued from its threatened doom. This means the improvement of drainage, water supply, clearance of jungle etc., in short, the restoration of the villages to their original condition of health and prosperity as far as that is possible.

No one is a more earnest advocate of mass education than my humble self ; yet I am compelled to say—sanitation first and education afterwards under existing circumstances, though I am aware that education indirectly helps sanitation. For, who would enjoy the blessings of education if the people were dead or in a dying state? Education can wait, but not sanitation. Of course, it goes without saying that if we could have both together by our communal efforts and State aid, nothing could be better or more welcome.

### THE SINEWS OF WAR.

Of course it requires almost a mint of money to carry out the remedial measures noted above. The question then is—Where is the money to come from? Well, there are at least three local rates in Bengal, the

Road Cess, the Public Works Cess and the Choukidari Tax, the bulk of which should be devoted to this purpose. Besides, the State is also bound to contribute its mite liberally, either from the Imperial or the Provincial Exchequer, or from both, to an object in which, as I have said above, the very existence of the nation, and therefore, of the Empire, is involved. The history of each of the three local rates mentioned above is of thrilling interest. As it is impossible for me to relate it in its entirety in the short compass of this Address—that would fill several volume—I shall content myself with dealing with the matter as briefly as possible. This history will be found in the appendix.

### EDUCATION.

I now come to a topic which is as important as sanitation itself and is the next most crying need of the country. Many of you are experts in that line and will, no doubt, have already thought over all possible and desirable reforms in that direction and are going to give the Conference the benefit of your experience and wisdom. To me, however, the most important matters which should engage our attention under this head appear to be (a) the health of our students and (b) secondly the threatened officialisation of secondary education.

### THE HEALTH OF OUR STUDENTS.

The thing which first occurs to me as primarily and vitally affecting the health of our student folk is the disproportionate pressure and strain on their tender

systems by the University examinations. It is an irony of fate that the University, which was started to benefit the rising generation of the country and which has certainly been pursuing this noble aim in its own way, has, no doubt unwittingly, been turned into one of the instruments for crushing all health and life out of them. Already the youth of our country suffer from such health-destroying and life-sapping agencies as poverty, malaria and other scourges in common with the other portions of the population. Born of parents, half-fed and anæmic, and bred up on a soil which is the haunting ground for all sorts of epidemic they start life with a handicap such as is unknown to the youth of the other parts of the world.

Already handicapped by the causes mentioned above, the Bengalee boy finds himself face to face with a system of education which serves but to intensify the effects of his unfavourable environment. Before he attains his sixteenth year, his tender brain is well-nigh crushed by a cart load of books on a bewildering variety of subjects and the severe strain of the examinations on these subjects goes on cramping and damaging the physique in no small degree. This taxing of the brain and cramping of the physique go on *pari passu* with the ordinary debilitating causes which one born in a country like ours must have to submit to. So that the candle of the student's life begins to burn at both ends at the threshold of his worldly career and this goes on as long as his educational career lasts.

The result is, as we find daily, that the products turned out by the Universities, though counting among

## A COMMITTEE OF ENQUIRY

them some scholars of great eminence and strong intellectual calibre, are, in the main, physical wrecks. Their finely developed minds are, alas, encased in thin, attenuated frames, wanting in youthful vigor and vivacity in which dyspepsia, myopoea, insomnia, malaria and a host of other 'ias' jointly and severally struggle for mastery—not to speak of the dire scourges of tuberculosis and the like. If there are students who are lucky enough to escape this general fate it is not because of, but in spite of, the system in vogue.

## A COMMITTEE OF ENQUIRY.

In my humble opinion the first step that should be taken by our authorities to mend matters in this direction should be the appointment of a Committee, mainly non-official in character, constituted of leading Indian members of the different Universities, and, with a strong element of medical experts among them. Let the Committee be sent about the different parts of the country, examining the students of the different schools and colleges, inquiring into their modes of life, their daily routine, the hours they have to spend in preparing for their examination, the nature of ~~their studies and of the text-books prescribed and recommended for their~~ examinations, the food and raiment their parents or guardians can afford to provide them with, the health of the villages or towns they live in and so forth. And need I say that they will then be told a tale that will simply stagger the whole country?

The first duty of such a Committee, then, should be to devise a system of examination that will, while

efficiently testing the knowledge of the examinees, operate with the minimum of hardship on their delicate and debilitated physique. The dreadful system which makes one single final examination the sole arbiter of their academic destinies should, by all means, be abolished. This is the bugbear that robs their tender constitutions of half their sleep and appetite and almost all the recreation necessary to keep the average human being in health. Even if all the toil and trouble of the anxious and overworked examinee be crowned with success, it means a success purchased with more than its proportionate price of life-blood. If it ends in failure, it means an addition of disappointment and discontentment to physical exhaustion. Such a system, then, deserves to be replaced by one which is less dangerous and more rational and it will not be difficult to devise a suitable scheme, if the proposed Committee give their whole heart to the work.

### OPEN-AIR SCHOOLS AND SANATORIA.

As practical remedies against this dismal state of things I may suggest the starting of open-air schools as well as special sanatoria for students.

In Western countries, open air schools are being established almost everywhere as safeguard against that growing scourge of modern life—tuberculosis. And if they have been considered a desideratum in countries which stand incomparably superior to ours in point of both health and wealth, how much more so should it be in ours? Not only should the Government start open-air schools of its own, but it should encourage

## SANATORIA FOR STUDENTS

and liberally subsidize the starting of such institutions by indigenous agency.

Then, there should be sanatoria in specially selected healthy places for the exclusive use of the students and those engaged in teaching them. Let students who are broken down after an examination or illness or those specially selected after periodical medical inspection be sent to these sanatoria to recoup their health, at nominal or no charges, the expenses being borne by the Department of Education. Facilities should be given to these students to stay there with their guardians or relatives or friends.

## CONTROL OF SECONDARY EDUCATION.

Next comes the question of the threatened officialisation of Secondary Education—by which I mean wresting it from the control of the Calcutta University and placing it under the Government department of education, a matter which must be keenly agitating the breasts of many of you.

Our secondary schools are already under the partial control of the District Magistrate; now they are proposed to be placed at their ~~absolute disposal~~. Is it necessary to explain what it means? It means the practical emasculation of our students. More rigorous discipline will be exacted from them, while some at least will be detained indefinitely as real or prospective anarchists on the mere *ipsi dixit* of the District Superintendent of Police. These extra doses of discipline will certainly not help the growth of the



intellect or manliness of the boys but rather cramp and demoralise them. Be it remembered that these students furnish the foundation of the national super-structure, and a healthy development of their mind is even more important to the State than to the grown-up students themselves. Rather our children should go without education than that they should be subjected to such unnatural and emasculating influence. What acts of cruelty and folly are not committed in the name of "discipline"! Who is more competent to speak on this subject with authority than our respected countryman, Sir Gooroodas Banerjee? Here is what he says on this much-vaunted "discipline" of the Government education department in his newly published work on "the Educational Problem in India":—

"I yield to none in my desire to maintain strict discipline in every sphere of life, and especially in the educational field where character begins to form. As a Hindu, I deeply love and highly respect the old type of student life, a life of rigid discipline and austere asceticism. Only I would insist upon discipline being self-imposed through the student's internal feeling of respect for it, and not enforced by external authority. It is true that, in the early stages, discipline has to be enforced in order to accustom the neophyte to it, but it should be imposed with loving kindness and not with supercilious contempt. I need hardly point out that it is only when discipline is voluntarily submitted to, that it produces any real good, and that discipline enforced by mere severity of treatment, creates a revulsion of feeling not only against the trainer, but also against discipline itself.

"Any proposed measure of educational reform which seeks to substitute for a controlling agency with

## PARTITION OF DISTRICTS

a popular and moderating element, an agency without such element should, therefore, be strongly deprecated in the true interests of education and discipline."

The outcome of State control of our schools will be exactly what Sir Gurudas deprecates. It will create "a revulsion of feeling" in the minds of our hopefuls "not only against the trainer, but also against discipline itself." That is to say, instead of being honest citizens, many of them will become lawless and disorderly desperadoes when they grow up and become a danger both to Society and Government.

### DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

Now I shall turn to a subject which is just now uppermost in the minds of us all—I mean the report of the Bengal Administration Committee. There are people who have blamed the Government of Bengal for having published it at a time like this. I don't agree with them ; for, if it had not seen the light of day the public would have been deprived of enjoying a great treat. I am extremely grateful to H. E. the Governor for enabling us to enjoy the delicious nectar which the Report in question so generously provides. Just see how the Committee have found in the partition of districts a sort of Hollwell's pills for curing almost all administrative evils and distempers.

Is there any anarchy in the land? Well, the remedy is to partition districts into smaller bits so that each District Officer may hold his district in the palm of his hand and be able to pick out and crush

each individual anarchist with his own thumb, as one does a bug or a louse. Is the health of the people suffering? The remedy is to partition the districts, for a smaller district means that the District Magistrate will be enabled to enquire of the health of every individual villager and the District Civil Surgeon to treat every individual patient. Is prevalence of crimes troubling our society? Well, you have only to partition the district and a District Officer will be able to catch every blessed thief or burglar with his own hands. Is it the bad state of local self-government or education that you are complaining? Well, it will all disappear when the district is reduced in size, for will not that enable the great magician, the District Officer, to touch every village and every school-boy with his wand and develop the one into an ideal unit of local self-government, and the other into an ideally loyal and useful citizen?

And so on and on. The great image of partition of districts has been installed and any and every flower must be plucked to be laid at its feet. It is just like the Doctor in Gil Blas. It was with his own favourite panacea,—hot water and bleeding,—that he was concerned and not with the disease or the life of the patient. Be it any disease, the same remedy must be applied—the patient must be more and more bled, and given more and more hot water.

Just mark how, in the blind worship of this new image,—the partition of districts—all other considerations, logical, financial and statesmanlike, have been cast to the four winds. Take the question of costs

## PARTITION OF DISTRICTS

only. The history of the proposals for the partition of districts (given in pp. 32-35 of the Report) shows that each time the proposal cropped up the Government of India had to refuse to give effect to it on financial grounds. But now that, owing to the war and other untoward circumstances all the Government's Imperial and Local resources are so hard pressed as to be unable to meet even the ordinary and most necessary costs of the administration, the Government has chosen this as the exact psychological moment for carrying out this costly measure!

### THE PARTITION OF DISTRICTS.

The question of the partition of some of our districts has been discussed threadbare in the press and also by the leaders of the affected districts. It will also, I believe, form the subject of a resolution of this Conference. Indeed, those delegates who are directly interested in the matter ought to be heard in some detail in connection with this burning question of the day. I shall, therefore, touch a few salient points only. This partition of districts is a very serious matter with us. In several respects it is as serious as the late partition of Bengal. We are a decaying people and hence have not yet been able to realise its gravity and importance. Gentlemen, it is an all-Bengal question—every Bengalee is directly or indirectly interested in it. But how many of us are yet aware of the consequences of the proposed measures? Thousands of protest meetings, some of them attended by lakhs of people, in cities, towns,

villages, and hamlets, had been held when Bengal was sought to be partitioned, but not a dozen meetings have been held, even in the doomed districts, to expose the utter unjustifiable character of this threatened measure. Nay more I hear with pain and sorrow that there are educated men who for some immediate gain are disposed to join the official cry in favour of the partition. When I think of the growing demoralisation and apathy of our people something like blank despair fills my mind.

### HOW THEY ARGUE.

Gentlemen, the way in which the intelligent governing authorities sometimes argue a public question seems to be too subtle for ordinary obtuse-headed members of the subject race. Why are they going to divide a district like Mymensingh or Midnapur? Their reply is that it is "unwieldly," and therefore too heavy a charge for one District Officer. Let us see. There is no doubt that both Mymensingh and Midnapur are big districts. But, neither of them had collapsed though each had been under the administration of a single Magistrate for upwards of a century. On the other hand, both have made steady progress towards civilisation all along the line. It should also be remembered that many of the previous Magistrates of the districts in question laboured under serious difficulties for want of communications as well as for the illiteracy and ignorance of the masses of the people. These disadvantages have now disappeared to a large extent. How can then equally highly paid members

## DUTIES OF THE DISTRICT OFFICER

of the Civil Service of the present day complain of the heaviness of these districts without confessing that they do not possess the energy and administrative capacity of their predecessors?

### OVER-WORKED DISTRICT OFFICER.

We fully admit that a Magistrate-Collector has to do more work than he can possibly do. But why is he over-worked? Because he will not part with one grain of his power. He wants to see, hear and do everything himself. Here is a short list of his principal duties.

He has his revenue functions and his judicial functions over and above his purely magisterial functions. He is the Head of the Police, Chairman of the District Board, the District Registrar, and also perhaps Chairman of the Municipality, Chairman of the Dispensary Committee, School Committee and what not. And he has moreover to write numerous reports and make frequent tours. Where is the wonder, then, that he will find himself bent down with over work? But is not this complaint of the District officer a good deal self-created? Let us see.

### HOW HE CAN RELIEVE HIMSELF.

A District Magistrate is a highly paid and highly educated member of the covenanted Civil Service. As such, it is but fair to himself as well as the tax-payers who maintain him that his duties also shall be correspondingly high and superior. He ought to be vested

mostly with work of a guiding, supervising and controlling nature and should not meddle with every petty administrative detail.

There is no reason, for instance, why he will preside over the self-governing bodies such as the District Board, the Municipality, the numerous local Committees, etc. These may very well be left to the educated indigenous agency for whose political education they were undoubtedly started. This will not only afford him a good deal of relief but develop initiative and independence in the Indians who are, for obvious reasons, hampered and demoralised by the august (and not unoften interfering) presence of the District Lord.

Then, much of his judicial work may be delegated to the subordinate magistracy, especially the honorary portion of it. The District Registrarship, again, may very well be delegated to one of the senior Deputy Magistrates. If one of the latter can successfully perform at the present moment the functions of the Inspector-General of Registration, there is no reason why he cannot do the work of a District Registrar.

In this way the most effective relief may be afforded to the over-worked District officer. Only it requires two things—(1) confidence in his Indian officers and (2) just enough of moral courage to give up the exercise of a portion of his power. Of course to enjoy authority is delicious and to part with it is painful; but the Magistrate, if wise, should readily undergo this little sacrifice, for he thereby not only saves himself from a breakdown of his constitution,

but makes the administration better, and more popular.

As for his touring functions, with the rapid multiplication of Railways and their branches and feeders, and with such further means of speedy locomotion at his disposal as motor-cycles and motorcars and steam-launches (where necessary), touring no longer is half so troublesome as it formerly used to be.

### THE CLOSER TOUCH ARGUMENT.

So much for one of the main official arguments for the partition. Here is another. Unless a big district is divided, says the Administration Committee, the District Officer "cannot come into closer touch with the people." Is it really so? How many people can a District Officer, over-whelmed with work as he is, see in the course of a year? We fancy not more than 10 thousand with his utmost efforts. Well, Midnapur is proposed to be cut into two districts, one containing a population of 17½ lakhs. and the other about 11 lakhs. Now if the Magistrate of each of these two districts come across even a lakh of men, then there will still remain 16½ lakhs in one and 10 lakhs in another unvisited by him. What do you then gain by subdividing a district into two or three parts?

The question then comes—what good do the people expect by coming into closer touch with the District Officer? Under existing circumstances, every District Magistrate comes across at least some people, though not the majority, in his jurisdiction. Are



those who are lucky enough to see his bright face any way happier than those who are not so lucky?

Of course the presence of the District officer would be a blessing if he could give relief to the millions in his charge in respect of one hundred and one evils from which they are suffering, such as malaria, cholera, water scarcity, bad-drainage etc. But, he is quite helpless in these matters for want of funds.

### OTHER LINES OF ARGUMENT.

Here is another line of argument adopted by the Committee to prove the necessity of sub-dividing the districts. It is so extraordinary that it has shocked even the "Statesman", says the Committee: "We have no hesitation in thinking that, had these districts years ago been divided into manageable areas, the campaign of sedition and dacoity would have met with less success." The "Statesman" offers the following comment on this statement:—

"The case seems to be over-stead. Anarchist crime has flourished in Calcutta itself where there is no lack of police and administrative machinery. The Dacca conspiracy was hatched in the headquarters of a district and division, which could not under any conceivable scheme be more amply provided with officials."

Was the Committee really so lamentably ignorant as not to know that the anarchist movement was due to that odious measure of Lord Curzon, the partition of Bengal, and not to the unwieldy size of any district? In pre-partition days, Mymensingh, Dacca and

Midnapur were as big as they are now, yet they were as quiet as any other districts of Bengal. After the partition, however, there was scarcely a district, large or small, which was not violently agitated. With this experience before them, we wonder that the Committee should have advocated the partition of several important districts with the prospect of unsettling the minds of the people over again.

The fourth ground justifying the sub-division of the districts is embodied in the following extract from a Resolution of the Government of Bengal:—

“The partition of the district of Midnapur is an urgent administrative necessity which should be undertaken as soon as funds are available. Above all, the Governor in Council is satisfied that it is impossible to introduce into Midnapur a satisfactory system of local self-government until the district has been divided into two separate districts of manageable size.”

Is it a fact that the smaller the district, the more efficient is its administration? From this point of view, the Boards of Bogra, Malda, Pabna and other smaller districts must be better managed than such bigger ones as the Burdwan, 24-Parganas, Berhampur, Krishnagar and so forth! This is Civil Service logic in excelsis.

## THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SHIELD.

So much for the argument of the official advocate of the partition. Let me now turn to the other side of the shield. We are already over-governed and the price we have to pay for the administration is almost

crushing. Here is the real situation. For nearly fifty years Bengal, including Behar, Orissa, Chota Nagpur, nay, even Assam for a considerably long period, was ruled by one Lieutenant-Governor with a few Secretaries. The province did not break down ; on the other hand, it made a steady progress towards the right direction under this arrangement. But, in the place of one, we have now got practically nine provincial rulers—the Governor with his three Councillors, the Lieutenant-Governor of Behar and Orissa with his three Councillors, and the Chief Commissioner of Assam. This means an addition of cost to the administration which the poor people can hardly bear. And the proposal of dividing the districts means another item of heavy financial burden on our back.

### THE HUGE COST.

What may be the cost of partitioning Mymensingh, Midnapur, Dacca and Backergunj? The Local Government was interpellated on the subject and you are aware what answer was given—"We don't know yet."

This is the way how our administration is carried on to-day. In other countries they first make an estimate of cost and then launch a project. Here the position is reversed. A rough calculation shows that the partition of a district like Midnapur means an additional permanent expenditure of something like a lakh of rupees per annum and an initial cost of 7 to 8 lakhs for building the new district. Add to this the expense of creating many new sub-divisions in those

districts which will not be partitioned. Is not the prospect before us far from cheerful? Lakhs of rupees are to be raised from starving people so that the members of the Civil and other Services whose numbers will be increased may be adequately paid! If the scheme of partition is at all to be carried through, the only way to keep down expenditure would be to reduce by half the present scale of pay and allowance of the Indian Civil Service. John Bright used to complain that the I. C. S. was the *most* highly paid service in all the civilised world.

### FURTHER WEAKENING OF POPULAR STRENGTH.

Here is another feature of the "inestimable blessing," to quote the words of Lord Curzon re: the partition of Bengal, which the Local Government proposes to bestow on the people by its partition policy. If union is strength, disunion is weakness. In Midnapur the people are now about three millions strong who have a common interest in all public matters; but divided, not only will they have separate interests of their own, which will create a feeling of estrangement between them, but, being numerically reduced, their strength will be proportionately reduced. The feeling of kinship that now exists among these millions is a great asset to the district. With the division of the districts, however, not only will the close neighbourly feeling that has existed among them from time immemorial depart for ever, but the two hundred districts will each grow weaker in every respect.

## DIVIDING THE MILCH-COW.

The proposal of the partition of a district reminds me of the partition of a milch-cow which belonged jointly to two Mahomedan brothers. Both persisted that they must have the animal and its milk in their respective houses. They ran to the Kazi for advice and he decided that the cow should be cut longitudinally into two equal portions, from head to tail, and the brothers should divide them among themselves. Needless to say the result was the permanent loss of both the animal and the milk. The two newly created districts will thus yield no nourishing food to their respective peoples as the undivided one did, but will only weaken them both. Look at the condition of Jessore and Khulna which was a power in the land when it was one united district but, divided, each of them is now languishing. Midnapur, Mymensing, Dacca, and Backergunj are now flourishing districts. Rest assured that as soon as they are divided, Lakshmi (Goddess of Prosperity) will forsake them for ever.

## THE PRESENT POSITION OF THE TWO CESSES.

### THE ROAD CESS.

The history of the two local Cesses is given elsewhere, but you should know their present position. Many of you are aware that I had the privilege of doing my humble best, for years together, both in my public and private capacity, to get the wrongs in connection with the Cesses redressed. I and all of us should be grateful to the ruling authorities, specially the

## ROAD CESS FUND MISAPPLIED

Government of Lord Carmichael that our efforts in this direction have not gone quite in vain. My first point with regard to the Road Cess Fund was that it should be earmarked and the District Boards instructed not to divert it to any illegitimate purposes, in other words, to devote it solely to the objects for which it was originally created. This request has been acceded to ; indeed, it has been provided in the last Local Self-Government Act that the Road Cess should be applied to no other purposes than those of village roads, village drainage and rural water supply. Thus a great point has been gained.

We have, however, yet a serious grievance, and I shall draw the special attention of this Conference to it. It is that the Road Cess Fund is made to maintain a class of roads which ought to be a charge on the Provincial Government. Now there are four kinds of roads in Bengal—imperial, provincial, district and village. The road cess was imposed to construct and maintain *only* village roads. But other roads are also being maintained at its cost. Every District Board should, therefore, be moved to make a list of these roads and request the Local Government to relieve the Cess Fund of this heavy charge.

## OFFICIAL VIEW.

I had a talk with Mr. H. L. Stephen, (Financial Secretary), on this subject in October 1912. He admitted the illegality of spending the road cess for maintaining imperial and provincial roads. But he contended that no distinction could be made between

district roads and the village roads, and hence both of them should be maintained by the road cess. His position, in my opinion, is not tenable. At least he could not rebut the following facts which I put before him. In the Road Cess Proclamation of Sir George Campbell occur these passages:—

“All persons assessed to the Road Cess are assured by the Government that every pice levied under the Act will be spent to improve the ‘local roads etc.’”

Again:

“Every tax-payer is encouraged and invited to claim that the tax shall be fairly applied to the ‘village roads’ and ‘local paths.’ ”

There is no mention of “district roads” in the above. It is all “village roads,” “local paths” etc. But Sir George places the matter beyond all dispute in his “Memoirs of My Indian Career.” Here is an extract from it:—

“We got money for local roads and proceeded to use it. That there might be no doubt that the tax was imposed for the benefit of the localities and not to relieve Government of burden hitherto borne, I had roads classified as *provincial or district and local*. The former the Government still maintained, not only spending what was before spent, but also contributing to the local funds of the poorer districts. The local funds were expended by local bodies for local roads and canals.”

Thus we find Sir George stating that he had roads classified as “provincial or district” and “local”, so as to prevent the local Government from shifting its

## **"FERRY FUND"**

own obligations in respect of the former upon the cess-payers. It is also clear that the provincial and district roads were classed in the same category, and they were quite different from the village ones, otherwise Sir G. Campbell would not have put an "or" after "provincial", and an "and" between "provincial or district." Now, if it be admitted, as Mr. Stephenson did, that provincial roads should not be a charge on the Cess Fund, it must also be admitted that the same Fund should be relieved of the cost of maintaining the district roads.

## **FURTHER FACTS.**

Here are further facts of an unassailable character in support of our proposition. Before the Road Cess was imposed in 1871 there were of course many district roads. How were they constructed and maintained? When I asked this question to Mr. Stephenson he said he did not know. I, however, pointed out to him that they were made and kept up with the proceeds of what was called the "Amalgamated District Fund," popularly known as the "Ferry Fund." It was composed of the following items of receipts: (1) ferry tolls ; (2) road tolls ; (3) one per cent of the revenue of Khas Mahals ; and (4) provincial grants. A Fund thus existed in pre-cess days for the construction and maintenance of district roads. Where is that Fund? We should in one voice demand that either the Government should disgorge this Fund or maintain the district roads at its own cost. And do you know what would be the result of such an arrangement? A saving of



## KRISHNAGAR SPEECH

lakhs of rupees annually, which would be available for the sanitary improvement of our villages, now the dens of malaria and cholera, ever-grown with rank jungles and honey-combed with dirty pools of water.

### THE PUBLIC WORKS CESS.

The Government of India, having utilized *ad libitum* the Public Works Cess Fund fully for 23 years, and three-fourths of it from 1905 to 1913, was pleased to transfer the whole of it in 1913 to our District Boards, which are also the custodians of the Road Cess Fund. Sir William Duke, while noticing this matter in his speech on the financial statement, observed that "many will think that this great measure of liberality to local bodies was an act of justice." But it cannot be a full measure of justice till the proceeds of this Cess spent by the Government of India for 35 years amounting to something like 15 crores of rupees have been returned to Bengal and Bihar for the benefit of the cess payers. The P. W. Cess would not have been made over to the District Boards if the Government of Lord Carmichael had not pressed the Government of India hard for money to remove water difficulty. I had some little hand in this business, but that is a personal matter. Indeed, the concession was the outcome of the rural water-supply conference held, under the auspices of H. E. the Governor, at Darjeeling in October 1912 in which I had the honour of taking a humble part. A word to the District Boards. The Public Works Cess was secured solely for the purpose of removing the water difficulty ; they must not, therefore, divert it to any

other purpose. The efforts of those who raised the cry of water-supply and sanitary reforms among the rural population have not thus gone in vain. For the Bengali people to exist they must live in rural tracts in some health and comfort and it is yet possible to make our desolate villages habitable if the proceeds of the three local rates—the Road Cess, the Public Works Cess and the Chowkidari tax, which fetch a crore of rupees or more per annum, are properly utilized.

• PROTECTION OF VILLAGES.

In the appendix you will find the history of the village watch and the Choukidari Tax. I shall now proceed to deal with the protection of our villages from the depredations of thieves, robbers and dacoits. The present situation is this. The main duties of the village Chowkidar or the watchman under the Chowkidari Act are two:—

- (1) to guard property of the villagers by night patrol ; and
- (2) to report crimes, deaths and births, the state of the crops, etc., to the police.

As regards the first, the villages would not be in a worse plight if there were no official chaukidars in Bengal ; for it is notorious that they do not protect them from thieves and burglars whatever their other activities may be. If the village-watch is abolished, the residents will guard their property in the same way as they do now ; that is to say, the well-to-do among them will employ their private Choukidars and the

## KRISHNAGAR SPEECH

poorer classes will themselves keep watch over their own goods and chattels.

The villagers must, however, be given the right to use fire-arms to protect themselves from armed dacoits. The Government is not, however, willing to do so. I had recently a conversation on this subject with one of the highest authorities in the land. He had two objections, one of them being that the possession of arms by the people might lead to many accidents among them. My reply to this was that as so many of them were dying from Malaria and Cholera, we did not mind if a few more were to die from gun and revolver accidents. His other objection was that the possessors of these arms might turn their weapons against the authorities! Alas, when will the rulers learn to trust the people? I may here remark *en passant* that in our younger days when guns were freely distributed to the people, they scared away dacoits from their doors by simply firing them blank at night. If only half-a-dozen respectable families in every village were allowed to hold fire-arms, this very fact would make that village free from the inroads of dacoits. And the Government is no doubt aware that the villagers need these arms so very badly not only to protect themselves from unwelcome human outrages but also from the ravages of wild animals.

## SELF-GOVERNMENT.

The late King-Emperor in one of his addresses from the Throne declared that the only thing which could make his subjects "prosperous and loyal was the

grant of free institutions to them." The suggestion comes not from an ordinary person but from the British Sovereign himself. Thus by granting "free institutions" to the people of India, not only would their growing discontent be removed but British rule permanently established on their hearts. Indeed, it looks old enough that when the Transval has got its Parliament, Ireland its Home Rule, a perpetual one-man rule should be the lot of India inspite of her single-minded devotion to the British Crown and her immense sacrifices at the present critical time.

### THE PIONEER'S SCHEME OF SELF- GOVERNMENT.

Gentlemen, would you be surprised to learn that the "Pioneer" newspaper made a suggestion, in all seriousness, that Bengal should be made over to the Bengalees? It came about in this wise. In 1893 Mr. John T. Growes of Georgia proposed that the American Government should found a new State in Colorado, in New Mexico, hand it over wholesale to the coloured race, and thus solve the Negro problem in the States. They alone should rule the country, make its laws, and hold its offices, the Federal Government giving them every assistance in setting up in business, and generally helping them towards their industrial development. Mr. Growes' idea led the "Pioneer" to indite the following leader towards the end of November 1893:—

"Why not make over Bengal to the Bengalees, and isolating it from the rest of the administration, allow that ingenious people to run the Province on their own

lines? We should require to retain, of course, the railways, Fort William and the port approaches, and business quarters of Calcutta: and Behar and Orissa as separate countries would not be included. The Bengalees would have their own laws, their own Courts, their own Commissioners and Collectors, and no doubt their own Parliament. All this would be no affair of ours, so long as the revenue—lump sum in commutation of the Permanent Settlement and other Imperial taxation—was paid punctually, and the security of the European respected. You would have done away with the Indian grievance at a stroke, for no one could complain any longer that any position was not open to his aspiration. He would have but to go to the Bengalis—and as we know, the Indians are all one nation—and lay himself out for whatever post his ambition craved, the Lieutenant-Governorship or the Nawabi as the case might then be. It would be that some would take an unconstitutional way of aiming at power, but if the Parliament and people of Bengal were not equal to dealing with such attempts, it would be merely one of the many ways in which it would be open for them to demonstrate their incapacity for freedom.

“We should have started an experiment in self-government, whose reality no one could gainsay, instead of the bolstered pretence by which we now seek to impose upon ourselves and make a compromise between our democratic instincts and the necessities of our position. Preposterous as the idea may on first sight seem, it cannot be denied that it is strictly logical. For nearly a hundred years the principle has con-

stantly been asserted by many of our most prominent public men that England is only in India with the purpose of teaching the Indians to govern themselves. After nearly a hundred years we have not made one single step which would prove the sincerity of this conviction, or which brings it any nearer to accomplishment. The danger of foreign aggression is the bar which prevents us at present from coming into disagreeable contact with our promises and professions ; but the foreign question does not exist for Bengal, and if the Bengalees were left to get along by themselves it would at any rate be a genuine experiment, which if successful might be gradually extended to Madras, Bombay and so on, and if it were not successful would clear up an ambiguity in our politico-moral ideas which more than anything else has been the source of hesitancy and confusion in the tenor of our administration."

Is there anything too absurd or too impracticable in the proposal of the "Pioneer"? There cannot be any two opinions as regards the desirability of raising up the Bengalee people from its present condition through the kind help of the English. It was the Bengalees who first brought the English into this country, and it was the Bengalees, again, who helped them in extending and consolidating their Empire in India. It is the Bengalees, also, who have always stood steadfastly by England during all her troubles in this vast peninsula. If the English rulers are pleased to make over the administration of Bengal to the Bengalees and permit them to learn self-government on the conditions suggested by the "Pioneer", surely they

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will be doing a glorious act, worthy of their instincts and traditions, of which they may well be proud.

The "Pioneer" justly remarks, that "preposterous as the idea may seem on first sight, it is strictly logical." There is no doubt that the early English rulers were perfectly sincere when they declared that if commerce was their main object to be in India, they had also another great mission in view, namely, to teach the Indians the art of governing themselves. A little more than seventy-five years ago, when the Parliamentary Act of 1833 was passed, Lord Macaulay from his seat in the House said that it "would be the proudest day" for England when the Parliamentary institution would be planted in India. This was when the East India Company were the masters of this country. Queen Victoria, when she took direct charge of Indian affairs in her own hands, also began her reign with a still more solemn declaration, namely, that the Indians would be governed on the same principles as the Englishmen were. And this declaration was reiterated with equal solemnity by Her Majesty's successors. Can it be for a moment doubted that they were absolutely sincere and earnest in their professions?

It should be remembered that Bengal practically governed herself before the advent of the English. Almost each district then had its Hindu or Mussalman ruler who paid some revenue to the Nawab of Murshidabad and was allowed to do whatever he liked in his own territory. In this way, Burdwan, Krishnagar, Jessore, Nattore, Dinaipur, etc., had their respective ruling houses who exercised sway over the people. Of

## BENEFITS OF BRITISH RULE

course nothing like the absolute peace which the English authorities have established prevailed at that time in the land but order p'presumably might have come out of chaos in due course, as it has come in other countries under similar circumstances. Be that as it may, there cannot be any manner of doubt that, the Bengalees of the present day, Hindu and Mussalman, would be able to do far better under the benign protectorate of the British Government than their forefathers did when the country was in an unsettled state, the central authority having lost all power of control and organization.

The English rulers have replaced anarchy and ignorance by order and enlightenment. They have increased the resources of the country by their superior scientific knowledge and by the introduction of railways, steamers, canals, post offices and telegraphs. Life and property are now far more safe than before. With all these advantages, and under the protection of England, if the Bengalees cannot manage their purely domestic affairs they deserve to be effaced off the face of the earth. It goes without saying that, in the beginning, the experiment might show signs of failure, but it is bound to be a success eventually if the rulers are bent upon achieving it.

### A VERY MODEST SCHEME.

#### Provincial Autonomy.

Lord Hardinge, it would be remembered, gave a distinct assurance in his famous despatch of August, 1912 that Indian Provinces would be converted into so



many autonomous administration. About that time "the scheme of devolution for Scotland" which, according to Mr. Asquith "was the necessary sequence of Irish Home Rule" was under consideration of the British Government ; and the "Times" in its article on "India and Provincial Devolution" though deprecating "the ill-considered passage in Lord Hardinge's despatch" which in its opinion, had "engendered wild dreams" in the Indian mind admitted that "it is not perhaps unnatural that a British Government which is about to introduce a measure of provincial autonomy within the British Isles, should be credited with similar ideas in regard to other parts of the Empire." Provincial autonomy which our present Viceroy promised in his Despatch, however, does not go far enough and does not meet all our requirements and aspirations ; yet, it is the beginning of the right sort of devolution. It evidently meant that the internal administration of the Province should be carried on by its Governor and his Executive Council with the help of a really representative popular Council, the members of which being empowered to exercise a potent voice over the administration.

Under the scheme the Supreme Government retains the power of interference in case of misgovernment. The districts will be in the hands of Civilian-Magistrates as now. The police force will not be disbanded. The revenue officers will do their duties as usual: in short, the machinery of the Government will remain exactly as it is. All that is required is to constitute a real and living, and not a sham and dead, national Council, and

## ADVICE TO YOUNGMEN

authorise it to control the administration in such a way as to bring more money into the coffers of the Government for effecting reforms in various directions and establish peace and contentment among the people by attending to their one hundred and one grievances which, under the present arrangement, cannot be attended to, and which, therefore, remain unredressed. Above all, the proposed Council should be rendered independent in respect of finance and legislation, subject to the control of the Central Government. The scheme is far from comprehensive—it will not satisfy the just ambition of the Indian nation, but it may be the beginning of the self-government reform till the goal of Colonial Government under British protection is reached, stage by stage. If even this small measure of self-Government is denied to the people of India after the conclusion of the war, well may they exclaim with Cardinal Wolfe "Had I served God etc."

## CONCLUSION.

A few words to the younger generation, and I have done. Need I remind you, my young friends, that the salvation of the country rests on you, and not on us old folks, who must pass away to the other world in a short time? All that we can do is to give you advice ; but, it is for you to materialize it. First of all, you should never forget the absolute necessity of relying more upon yourselves than others for your regeneration. Nations by themselves are created. As I have pointed out elsewhere, we can remove many of our disabilities and lead a free contented life by our own

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exertions. But for this purpose a band of earnest, sincere and self-sacrificing workers is needed. Is it asking too much of you to give us such men to preach to the people that they must cease quarrelling, that they must give up litigation and foreign manufactures as far as that is possible, and that they must return to the simple mode of life which their ancestors had lived. You have, no doubt, an uphill work before you ; but there is no cause for despair. Your national consciousness has been awakened and education has made a vast progress throughout Bengal during the last fifty years, thanks to our benign rulers. If you can properly harness and utilize this widespread national feeling, the regeneration of your people is bound to come in due course. Never break law or disobey the constituted authority.

You cannot achieve your national weal by resorting to lawless and violent methods—no people ever did. Soul-force and not brute-force should be your guiding motto in life. Above all, bear in mind that Sree Gauranga was born in Bengal to preach love to God and man in a way perhaps never before preached by any other prophet in East or West. May His spirit guide your course and direct your steps. May your noble efforts for raising a depressed people be crowned with success. And lastly, may the Merciful Father of us all gather his children under His protecting and sanctifying care and help them to maintain the integrity of their race!

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# Separation of Judicial and Executive Functions

Following is the full text of the speech delivered by Babu Moti Lal Ghose at a public meeting held at the Town Hall of Calcutta on Friday the 18th April, 1913:—

The question of the separation of functions, judicial and executive, has been discussed thread-bare during the last one hundred years ; but, perhaps no one has dealt with the subject in a more exhaustive, more enthusiastic, more eloquent and more masterly way than Sir Harvey Adamson as Home Member of the Government of India. His speech in this connection will live in history. One cannot too highly admire the unique moral courage and strength of character that he displayed on this occasion, as he had to brave and overcome the formidable opposition of his brother officials in giving expression to his honest conviction.

We all know why the executive authorities are so nervous about the reform. As Sir Harvey points out they thought their prestige as representatives of the Government would be gone if they were deprived of the privilege of acting both as prosecutors and judges. The official view seems to be this. The Magistrate, as lord of the District, must win a case, instituted by himself, or his subordinates in the police. For, if he were to lose it his prestige would suffer. Thus he must possess the power not only of prosecuting but also of trying

## JUDICIAL AND EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

the accused himself or through a subordinate of his so as to secure his conviction. If, however, he is deprived of his judicial power and reduced to the position of an ordinary prosecutor, the accused may be tried and acquitted by another, with the result that he may be made a laughing stock of the general public.

Sir Harvey, however, very successfully meets this sort of argument. He says that there are different stages of development. When there is rebellion in a country, a Magistrate may administer Martial Law there. When newly acquired territories have to be pacified the Magistrate may perhaps need powers over life and death. But if, on the other hand, a Magistrate claims similar power in an advanced and enlightened province, he does not enhance but destroys his prestige. Now, Indian administrators, generally speaking have very queer notions about what they call "prestige." Suppose they do a palpable wrong to the people. If they remove it not only do they do the right thing but they rise in the estimation of the people. All the same they will often stick to the wrong and thereby, they think, they succeed in maintaining their prestige.

Here are some candid confessions on the part of the Hon'ble Home Member. He admits that the District Magistrate may unconsciously be biased against an accused. He further admits that not only does the District Magistrate meddle with the judicial proceedings of his subordinates but he indirectly controls their judicial independence. Sir Harvey believes that the inevitable result of the present system is that criminal trials affecting the general peace of the District, are not

## STORY OF A MOSLEM PEASANT

always conducted in that cool atmosphere of impartiality and fairness which should pervade a Court of Justice. And, lastly, he makes the important admission, which should be recorded in golden letters, that "it is not enough that the administration of justice should be pure, it can never be the bedrock of our rule unless it is also above suspicion."

Our pleasure on reading the late Hon'ble Home Member's speech, however, evaporated like that of the humble Mussalman peasant in the story, who was delighted on getting a small quantity of milk, for the first time in his life, when we came to examine his scheme in detail. The peasant had never tasted milk before, and had, in his mind anticipated the pleasure of drinking the delicious liquid.

He put it in a pan, set it on the fire and sat down to watch the process of boiling. In a few minutes it came to boil and bubble up in the usual process of ebullition, and the simple peasant was amazed to find that not only was the pan full but the milk was brimming over. He was so overjoyed at the sight that he went down on his knees and thanked God in the fullness of heart at seeing so much more milk. Said he:—"Allah, enough. I don't want more." But alas! to his utter disappointment as soon as the point of boiling over was reached the whole quantity hissed over into the fire, not a drop remaining in the pan. Then he exclaimed mournfully: "Allah, why did you raise my expectation to such a pitch only to dash it in this cruel fashion?"

## JUDICIAL AND EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

Sir H. Adamson's scheme is no doubt good in its own way, but it is quite disappointing in the most important point. The separation of the two functions is earnestly sought by the people in order to save themselves from the clutches of the executive officers. But the concluding paragraph of his speech spoils all good points in his scheme. Here it is:—

“The district officer to be empowered as a District Magistrate, and certain other executive officers to be empowered as first class Magistrates solely for the performance of the preventive functions of Chapter VIII (omitting section 106) to Chapter XII of the Code of Criminal Procedure.”

Need we explain what the above means? Even after the functions have been separated the District Officer will, as now, be able to bind down even respectable people for keeping the peace under section 107—to send the Swadeshists to 2 years' rigorous imprisonment for sedition, under section 108—to disperse a public assembly by a mere word of command under section 127—and to take the most drastic action under section 145 in respect of land disputes.

Talking of practical schemes, I shall presently submit one for the consideration of the meeting. I had the privilege of a long discussion about it with Sir Harvey Adamson in March 1908, and he was good enough to admit its feasibility. But before doing so, I shall refer to a scheme prepared, it is believed, by the late lamented Mr. R. C. Dutt. It was proposed in 1893 and submitted to the then Secretary of State for India, in which it was suggested that the separation

could be effected by placing the Deputy Magistrates, who try criminal cases, under the District and Sessions Judges instead of the District Magistrate as now. In other words, let the District Magistrate retain his chiefship of the district police but let him be divested of all judicial powers and his control over the subordinate Magistrates, who administer criminal justice ; and let the District and Sessions Judge and not the District Magistrate, be the official superior of these subordinate Magistrates. Although the scheme had been backed by an ex-Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court and several distinguished retired Anglo-Indian officials, it did not meet with the approval of the Government chiefly, it is believed, on the ground of cost and several important administrative changes it would necessitate. But, by adopting the following scheme both cost and administrative changes may be avoided, and, at the same time, the real plague-spot may be removed to a considerable extent.

The plan I propose is a very simple one, and can be at once adopted, and the larger measure of reform may subsequently be introduced after due deliberations. Now the real plague-spot lies in Police cases. There is practically very little complaint of miscarriage of justice in regard to cases between private parties. But "rightly or wrongly", to quote the words of Rai Atul Chandra Chatterjee Bahadur, a distinguished retired Deputy Magistrate, in his evidence before the Police Commission, "the Subordinate Magistracy labour under the impression, which is largely shared by the general public and to which, in many instances, colour is given by



injudicious action on the part of the District Police Superintendents, that they would please the District Magistrate by convicting and displease him by acquitting in Police cases or where acquittal was impossible by pursuing a *laissez faire* policy in respect of the misdeeds or shortcomings of the police as disclosed by the evidence." Mr. R. C. Dutt also said the same thing before the Police Commission from his more than twenty years' experience as a District Magistrate. In short, the impression in the public mind is that, as a general rule a subordinate Magistrate cannot hold the balance of justice even, when he has to try a case sent up by the police, for he may thereby offend the District Magistrate, the head of the Police and injure his future prospects. Thus, if a satisfactory arrangement for the disposal of the Police cases could be made popular complaints in respect of miscarriage of justice by subordinate Magistrates might, to a large extent, disappear.

What I, therefore, propose is that a Magistrate with first class powers should be specially set apart both at district and sub-divisional head-quarters, for the purpose of trying "only police cases" and be placed under the District and Sessions Judge the District Magistrate having no official connection whatever with him. This remedy, in a somewhat different form, was recommended more than 20 years ago by no less an authority than the Bengal Police Committee which was appointed in 1891. We find the following passage in paragraph 183 of the Committee's Report:—

"It is difficult to suggest a remedy in the case of Sub-divisions, where a complete separation of functions

## POLICE MAGISTRATES

is impracticable, because there is only one officer who is immediately responsible for both the executive and criminal-judicial administration of the Sub-division. Where he has the assistance of another officer subordinate to him he can obtain some relief ; but the responsibility and, therefore, the burden of works of all kinds, necessarily falls mainly upon him. At a head-quarter station where there are several officers the case is different and there should always be at least one Magistrate of the first class who should be able to devote his undivided attention to the disposal of criminal cases. This is not a new suggestion but it seems to us to be of very great importance, especially now that the available number of Joint-Magistrates, whose duties used to consist almost entirely of the trial of criminal cases, has been so greatly diminished."

• With a slight change, the above suggestion can be converted into a real boon. At the head-quarter station, where there are several experienced Deputy Magistrates, let one of them be taken away from under the District Magistrate and made subordinate to the District and Sessions Judge. He may be called the "Police Magistrate," his duty being to try all police cases and also private cases if he can do so. This will entail no additional cost and need no administrative change.

At the sub-divisions similar Police-Magistrates ought also to be stationed. This means some cost no doubt, but if the Sub-Divisional Magistrate is relieved of the duty of trying Police cases, he will be able to pay more attention to several important matters which he

## JUDICIAL AND EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

cannot do now and which are falling into pieces for want of proper supervision. It should be noted here that a second officer in every subdivision has become absolutely necessary for one good reason. When the Sub-divisional Officer is on tour, the litigants with their witnesses and pleaders have to follow him from place to place and suffer endless troubles. A second officer may be utilized in removing this standing grievance as well in disposing of police cases.

Then again in several sub-divisions, Munsiffs, who are the subordinates of the District Judges, may be employed for trying police cases. As members of the Subordinate Judicial Service are now being appointed as Assistant Sessions Judges, Munsiffs should have a training in criminal matters. In this way it is possible to make arrangements for the disposal of police cases in the sub-divisions without incurring additional cost. But if some money is yet required for the appointment of a Second Officer in a sub-division surely this small amount should not be grudged, when the question of the purity of the administration of justice is concerned. The reform, as I said, may be introduced immediately at all head-quarter stations, and in many important sub-divisions also.

We must, however, agitate for the complete separation of the functions. This means that the District and Sessions Judge and the entire subordinate judiciary should be placed entirely under the High Court. The District Judge has now two masters to serve, the Executive Government and the High Court. The former is, however, his real master ; for his promotion

## KEEP THE HIGH COURT PURE

and transfer are in the hands of the Local Government. So to secure a complete separation this anomalous position should be removed.

But the High Court itself needs purification and its absolute independence must be maintained. If the authority of the High Court be liable to constant undermining by the Executive, no practical good can be expected by putting the judiciary under its control. If the fountain-head itself be pumped dry, the streams of unadulterated justice cannot flow. The cases of Gulab Banu, of the Khan of Hoti Mardan, of the Midnapore victims, of Babu Rajendra Narayan Singh of Bhagalpore etc., show unmistakably that the highest judicial tribunals in the country have now practically become a subordinate branch of the Executive Governments, Supreme and Local. This is an alarming state of things and the voice of the whole country should be raised against it. The appointment and removal of judges of the High Court is a question which should receive our serious consideration. In this country they are practically appointed by the Home Member on behalf of the Government of India. It is an open secret that in some instances, even the unanimous recommendation of the High Court in this respect, have been vetoed by the Government of India, acting on secret information from executive sources. The Government of India should no doubt have a hand in the appointment of the Judges of the High Court, but their voice should not prevail supreme. When there is a difference of opinion between them and the High Court, the matter should be referred to the Secretary of

## JUDICIAL AND EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

State for final decision. The suggestion made in this connection by my young friend Babu Provash Chandra Mittra, a Vakil in a pamphlet are excellent and may be utilized by the meeting.

One word more and I have done. In England the separation of two functions is as complete as it can be. Yet Englishmen cannot do without a trial by jury. This is perhaps due to the fact that a judicial officer is unconsciously led to look upon a case brought before him for trial more from official than popular point of view. Without the privilege of being tried by an independent body of jurors, the mere separation of magisterial and judicial function will, therefore, not mean much. If it is so necessary in England, where the trying Judge and the accused come from the same race and claim a common language, a common religion and a common set of manners, customs and traditions, how much more should it be here in India where these common bonds are oftener than not wanting between the tried, accused and the trying Judge? We should thus pray for the extension of the jury system not only in Sessions trials but also in respect of cases tried by District Magistrates and their subordinates. This privilege has been given to our Anglo-Indian fellow subjects for which we offer our congratulations to them. May we appeal to their generous instincts to help us in securing the same for the protection of our personal liberty?

## Government's Educational Policy

A public meeting of the people of Bengal was held at the Town Hall on 28th of July, 1913 to consider the new educational policy of the Government of India. Babu Moti Lal Ghose said :—

The new educational policy has several fantastic aspects. I shall deal with one or two. You know the adage, the woman who professes greater love for a child than its mother is looked upon with suspicion. Is it not a queer phenomenon that alien officials should claim greater solicitude, greater tenderness for the well-fare of our children than their own countrymen who are their natural guardians? We wonder how would the English people take it if a number of, say, German officials were to tell them to place the education of English students in their hands and not in those of the English universities. But everything is possible in India.

Here is another. It is said that the University is over-worked, and therefore the secondary education of the whole province should be transferred to the Local Government. But is it not the constant official cry that the Local Government is bent double with the weight of its endless ramifications of departments and multifarious varieties of works which it has hardly time to supervise? This reminds me of the Bengali doggerel, which, it is said, cures night-blindness when repeated three times every evening for a week by the affected.

## GOVERNMENT'S EDUCATIONAL POLICY

men, and a free translation of which appeared in a Calcutta paper the other day. I shall quote only three stanzas from it. Well, a village was inhabited by three potters:—

“One potter made pots, another broke them and the third knew not how to make pots. He who knew not pottery made three pots.

One pot had a hole, another was cracked and the third one had no bottom at all. In the pot which had no bottom at all was cooked three men's food.

One man was a hearty eater, another ate very little and the third could not eat at all. The man who could not eat at all ate three men's food.

They had three cows; one blind, one lame and one totally unfit to plough. The one totally unfit to plough tilled three acres of land.”

The Local Government is so over-worked that it has no breathing time ; therefore it is more fit to take charge of the secondary education of the province than the university which is less over-worked, and has ample means at its disposal to do this sacred duty with credit and efficiency. But I forget the Indian Civil Service which rules this country is capable of performing any task imposed on it. Nay, four of their members will easily and comfortably sleep on a bed which can hardly accommodate two!

And lastly, I would remind the authorities of the solemn message of the King Emperor during his visit to this country. His soul-stirring words are still ringing in our ears. Is it necessary for me to point out that the

## RESULT OF PRESENT POLICY

result of the present educational policy, if carried out, will be the reverse of what His August majesty wished? "It is my wish," said the King Emperor, "that there may be spread over the land a network of schools and colleges from which will go forth loyal and manly useful citizens" etc. But the outcome of the proposed officialised, civilianized, executivised and over-disciplined system of education will be not "manly and useful citizens" but artificial products with their manhood and usefulness stunted,—their manliness cribbed, cabined and confined under the iron rod of the official discipline and official politics.

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## Damodar Floods

A public meeting in aid of the sufferers from the great Damodar floods of August, 1913 was held at the Town Hall, Calcutta under the presidentship of H. E. Lord Carmichael, Governor of Bengal on Friday, the 22nd August, 1913.

Speaking on a resolution for appealing for funds in aid of the sufferers and the formation of a committee for the purpose Babu Moti Lal Ghose said :—

One cannot contemplate on the magnitude and the awful character of the present catastrophe without a shudder. There are calamities and calamities ; but nothing like an abnormal flood in this country. Epidemic diseases keep some people untouched ; famines caused by drought leave the affected at least free to move about and utilise the wild vegetables of nature. But the devastation caused by a sweeping inundation produces untold misery of every description. It brings on famine and pestilence in its train ; it renders the victims houseless ; it deprives them of even a bit of *terra firma* to stand upon, and causes that greatest of all calamities to the agricultural population, the destruction of their cattle and crops. Such is the calamity which has overtaken not hundreds, nor thousands, nor tens of thousands, but hundreds of thousands of people in the Burdwan Division, myriads of whom have been rendered homeless, foodless, and in

## AN APPEAL FOR MONEY

many cases, cattleless. A mint of money is needed to afford them relief.

Be it said to the credit of the people of Calcutta, specially our Marwari brethren, that the moment they heard of the calamity they opened relief subscriptions unasked, unsolicited, unapproached. Words also fail to describe the unselfish heroism of a noble band of workers,—students and non-students, young men and old of whom we are so proud,—who at the risk of their health and lives proceeded to inaccessible places and saved innumerable men, women and children by distributing to them food and clothes.

But we have not yet touched the fringe of misery. More money is thus needed. Indeed, the amount already raised was only a drop in the ocean and it has disappeared. To our misfortune, something like a famine is just now raging all over the country. Fancy, the coarsest of rice is selling at Rs. 6-4-0 per maund which is a famine rate. All the same every one, Indian or European, official or non-official, rich or poor, must do his duty at this juncture by contributing his mite to the relief fund. It is expected that we should be able to raise at least one lac of rupees. But this is possible if the wealthy men among the Indian and European community, as well as the high officials of the Government will be pleased to open their purse-strings liberally. I know it is difficult to part with money but I hope an exception will be made in the present case ; I can guarantee that they will not have to rue it, for God never forgets to reward those who alleviate the sufferings of their fellow-beings.

It should be, however, distinctly borne in mind that it is impossible for private charity to cope with a calamity of such gigantic magnitude as we have at present. The State must furnish the bulk of the sinews of war. And the idea of *taccavi* advances as a mode of relief ought to be abandoned. It is the Bania's help. *Taccavi* advances are not gifts, but loans carrying 6 per cent. interest. Agriculturists alone are entitled to these advances and for agricultural purposes only. The loans, again, are recovered by summary process under the certificate procedure by the revenue authorities, and in most cases the ryots' new huts and cattle will be sold up in satisfaction of the debt. Agricultural loans have no doubt their uses, but on the present occasion we need gratuitous relief from the Government, for saving not only the agriculturists but also the artisans, the weavers, and the poor *Bhadraloke* classes who have also been thrown into a state of utter destitution. May we, therefore, hope that if we can raise one lakh of rupees the Government will be graciously pleased to add 9 lacs more to it from the public exchequer? My reply to those who say that the Government cannot spend the general tax payers' money for such a purpose is—ask the tax-paying public, take a plebescite among them, and I can guarantee that 99 per cent of them will cheerfully permit, the custodian of their money, the Government, to spend it freely for this good and noble cause.

I now take the liberty of bringing a few matters of vital importance for the kind consideration of Your Excellency. If the Maharajadhiraj of Burdwan is

under the iron grip of the sunset law, so are the putnidars under him. That is to say, if the Maharaja's vast estate is liable to be sold up by public auction, if he is only one minute late in paying his revenue to Government on a particular day before sunset, similarly he is empowered to sell the estates of his putnidars on their failure to pay him their rents before sunset on a certain day fixed by him. The Maharajadhiraj may have his hoard or long purse to draw upon to meet the demand of the state ; at least he has ears of the responsible rulers to plead his own cause ; but these putnidars under him as well as other revenue-paying Zeminders in the flood-stricken areas are in a most pitiable position. They are practically placed between two fires: they must pay their rent punctually, otherwise they lose their Mehals but they have no chance of realising a rupee of rent from their ryots who have been ruined by the flood : nay, many of them are actually feeding the starving ryots though they themselves are in a sad plight. This morning several of these Talukdars saw me and asked with tears in their eyes to bring their case to Your Excellency's notice ; and I venture to hope that Your Excellency will be pleased to do all you can for them.

Here is a suggestion. If the Government be pleased to direct the Collectors of the flood-stricken Districts to postpone the sale of the 28th September and to realise the next two instalments of revenue in twelve equal instalments commencing from the 12th of January next, the land-holders, putnidars and tenure holders may be bound to grant similar concessions to the different classes of their ryots.

The next matter relates to Damodar embankments. The Maharajadhiraj pays Rs. 60,000 annually to Government for their maintenance. Other land-holders also bear a portion of the cost of the construction of these bunds and of their maintenance, which is realised from them in the same way and in a graduated scale as in the case of the Road and Public Works Cesses. That being so, who is responsible for the breaches in the embankments which have brought about this ruinous calamity in the province? An enquiry into this matter is urgently required. A commission of enquiry should also be appointed to examine the present policy of railway construction. There is no doubt that if there were more culverts in the railway line with wider openings the flood in the Burdwan Division would not have assumed such fearful dimensions.

Lastly, I would beg to remind Your Excellency of the noble policy enunciated by Lord Lytton in 1878 during the great famine in Southern India. His Lordship then declared, "I shall allow no man, no woman or child to die of starvation." By acting to this humane nay, angelic policy on the present occasion, both Your Excellency and His Excellency the Viceroy will earn the choicest blessings of God and lay the whole country under unrepayable obligation.

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# An Appeal For A United Congress

By Moti Lal Ghose.

(*A. B. Patrika* Office 8th December, 1934.)

Either we must have a united congress or none at all. That is my deliberate opinion and it is, I believe, shared by 95 per cent of our educated men. A house divided against itself must collapse in the end. The first duty of the leaders of Indian public opinion, therefore, is to make up the split in the Congress Camp.

Fancy the sad pass to which this national organisation has been reduced. Originally the Congress included among its members the representatives of all the important classes in the Indian community. But where are they now? The official-fearing Muhammadans left it in a body ; so did the handful of Europeans and Eurasians who had joined it ; and so did the Zeminders and merchants. Ultimately it came to be the organ of only the English educated middle class Indians. Even as such, though considerably weakened, it could do great service to the country. For in every land, the middle classes are the real power. But now they have divided themselves into two parties, one remaining in possession of the organisation and the other seceding from it. The inevitable result of the internecine quarrel must be the ultimate death of the Congress.

Seven long years have passed away since they separated themselves in anger at Surat. What a pity

they have not yet been able to make up their differences. This is all the more surprising as they hold exactly the same political views, and are equally anxious to serve their countrymen. But enough mischief has already been done. Indeed, the Congress is now not only regarded as a sectional body, but is languishing and dragging a life-less existence. It is therefore high time that they should forget and forgive, and unite themselves on a common platform for the purpose of regenerating their poor Mother country, which, in all consciousness, is in an extremely bad way.

If the two parties are earnest and sincere, they may at once come to a mutual understanding. The whole question is in a nutshell. The Conventionists insist that no one should be allowed to join the Congress unless he has signed the 1st article of their constitution in which the aims and objects of the Congress are embodied. Now though the non-Conventionists may justly protest against this condition being imposed on them as they were not consulted when the Constitution in question was framed, yet they have waived their objection to it. For they can conscientiously subscribe to it, the Conventionist aims and objects of the Congress being the same as their own. Thus the main difficulty in the way of a reconciliation has been removed.

The other obstacle is of a minor character. The non-Conventionists on their part insist that the Conventionist rule providing that only Congress Committees should elect delegates, must not be enforced in their case. And they have good grounds for making

this demand. This unfortunate rule was framed with the object of expelling the undesirables from the Congress, the undesirables being the very non-Conventionist leaders! Surely no non-Conventionist can, under such a circumstance, put himself under the operation of this rule, without losing his self-respect and sacrificing his principles. What they, therefore, urge is that they should be allowed to secure their election as delegates at public meetings convened either by some non-party association or by a number of respectable leading men. I think the Conventionists should agree to this reasonable term of the non-Conventionists. Then again no compromise is possible except on the principle of "give and take". The non-Conventionists have agreed to sign the first article of the Congress Constitution ; let the Conventionists also make a similar concession by acknowledging the right of all properly organised public meetings to elect delegates.

The Conventionists are, however, under this difficulty. Their rule of election, good or bad, is a part of the Congress Constitution. They cannot go against it without committing an unconstitutional act. The Congress alone can amend the rule ; but as it is not sitting now and the rule, therefore, cannot be altered, the election of delegates must take place under the existing arrangement.

The reply to this is that the Congress authorities are sensible men and sincere well-wishers of the country, and not unreasonable mode and Parsian law-makers. Surely they do not hold like the latter, that their rule is sacrosanct. As a matter of fact it is almost a foregone



conclusion that it will be either expunged or amended in a liberal spirit at this years' Congress session. Why should they then object to its immediate suspension while they thereby bring about the limited Congress without committing any immoral act or violating any cherished principle? As regards the unconstitutional aspect of the case, it is only technically so ; and technicalities should never stand in the way of bringing about such an important result as the closing up of a breach which is essential for the very existence of the Congress.

Here is, however, a way out of the difficulty to which no exception can be taken by even the staunchest Conventionist. Let the non-Conventionists be elected delegates at public meetings held under the auspices of a respectable non-party public body or a number of leading men of the locality. As Mr. S. K. Altakar of Satara suggests, let them attend the Madras Congress on the 1st day as visitors on the distinct understanding that the constitution will be so amended by the sitting Congress as to enable them to attend it the next two days as delegates. When the United Congress is thus formed, let a committee of the leaders of both parties be appointed to revise the existing Conventionist Constitution. In short, the terms of compromise may be as follows:—

(1) That the Congress creed (first article of the constitution) be signed by the non-Conventionists.

(2) That the rest of the constitution be accepted by them tentatively.

(3) That delegates elected at public meetings generally shall be deemed to have been duly elected. If it be deemed necessary they may attend the Congress at first as visitors and after the amendment of the Constitution as delegates.

(4) That a committee consisting of the representatives of both parties be appointed after the formation of the United Congress, to revise the Constitution ; their report to be submitted to the Congress for disposal by the Congress.

The above are the conclusion of the Conventionist and non-Conventionist leaders of Bengal who recently met to discuss the question of the United Congress. I submit that their deliberations are entitled to the serious consideration of the two parties in the other provinces. The scheme seems to me to be eminently practical and reasonable.

The object of the Conventionist election rule was evidently to prevent the entry of the rowdy elements in the Congress ; but, I wonder, its comic side did not strike its author. Fancy that a Congress Committee even when consisting of half a dozen young men who have very little position in society can elect any number of delegates, but not a public meeting convened by recognised leaders of Indian opinion ! It should be noted here that the chance of creating any disturbance in the Congress Hall by evil-disposed delegates has been removed by limiting the number of votes to each province.

Two weeks more and the Congress sits. The Secretaries to the All India Congress Committee should,

therefore, lose no time in circularising the members of that Committee to declare whether or not they, at least the majority of them, are willing to throw open the election of delegates to public meetings generally, and recognise them as such after amending the constitution as suggested above. And woe to India if they are not agreeable ; it would be a shame and disgrace if the two parties in the Congress cannot make up their quarrel at a time when even two such bitter enemies as Redmond and Carson had shaken hands and party factions have disappeared from England. The parties will never be united if they are not united this year." °

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## The Public Works Cess

(Babu Moti Lal Ghose gave a history of the Road Cess in Bengal in an appendix to his Presidential Address at Krishnagar in 1915. He also gave a note on the Public Works Cess which is printed below.)

If the imposition of the Road Cess in 1871 was a great wrong to the landholding and cultivating classes, who constituted and yet constitute perhaps ninety-five per cent of the population of the Province, a far greater wrong was committed, six years later, when the Road Cess was doubled by the imposition of another Cess of an identical character under the name of the Public Works Cess.

### VIOLATION OF PERMANENT SETTLEMENT.

The Road Cess was a direct violation of the terms and spirit of the Permanent Settlement. This is not our opinion only, but also that of very high official authorities. Indeed, when the Government of India sent up the proposal of levying the Road Cess in 1871 to the Duke of Argyll, the then Secretary of State for India, His Grace had the matter thoroughly discussed in his Council. And what was the result? Though one-half of the members of the Council supported his Despatch on the subject, the other half condemned it strongly on the ground of interference with Lord Cornwallis' Settlement and it was only by using his casting vote that the Duke was able to carry his point.

And who were these dissentient members? One was Sir Erskine Perry ; another Sir Frederick Halliday ; and the others were Mr. H. T. Prinsep, Mr. R. D. Mangles, Sir Frederick Currie and Sir H. C. Montgomery. They were all responsible advisers of the Crown, who had themselves either ruled large provinces or had exercised large powers in eminent official positions, who possessed local knowledge and were justly looked up to as the repositories of Indian wisdom. As their opinions are very interesting and valuable and known to very few, I shall make a few quotations from them to prove conclusively that the Government could not impose any cess on land without breaking sacred pledges.

Sir Erskine Perry: "I object to the Despatch . . . because it would be a direct violation of British faith to impose special taxes in the manner proposed."

Mr. H. T. Prinsep: "I have never felt so deeply grieved and disappointed at a decision given in opposition to my expressed opinions as when it was determined by a casting vote to approve and forward the Despatch . . . . which will shake the confidence hitherto felt universally in the honesty and good faith of Government."

Mr. R. D. Mangles: "We have no standing ground in India, except brute force if we ever forfeit our character for truth."

Sir Frederick Currie: "Sir Erskine's paper shows conclusively that (the levying of a special tax on the Zemindars) would be a breach of faith and the violation of the positive statutory engagement made with those zemindars at the Permanent Settlement."

Sir H. C. Montgomery: "A Government should not, in my opinion, voluntarily place itself in a position laying it open to be charged with a breach of faith."

But in spite of this vehement opposition the Duke of Argyll sanctioned the levying of the rate, though he was generous enough, as we have already seen, to lay down that the proposed rate should be not only imposed but spent with "the assent and concurrence of the cess-payers," and "that it is above all things requisite that the benefit to be derived from the rates, should be brought home to their doors, that these benefits should be palpable, direct, immediate." As we shall presently see, the Public Works Cess had not even this redeeming feature about it. Naturally when the impost was sought to be imposed in 1877 by the Government of Sir Ashley Eden it created the greatest sensation possible in Bengal.

## THE PUBLIC WORKS CESS A GREATER WRONG THAN ROAD CESS.

The P. W. Cess was a wrong in itself, because, like the Road Cess, it was also imposed in violation of the terms of the Permanent Settlement. But this wrong was enormously aggravated by several circumstances. First, unlike the Road Cess, it was not to be levied and spent with "the assent and concurrence" of the cess-payers but by the Government at its sweet pleasure. Secondly, though a local rate, it was to be devoted to the maintenance of imperial works, which

did not benefit those directly who paid the cess, as in the case of the Road Cess.

And what were these imperial works? They were mainly the Orissa, Midnapur and Sone Canals. The necessity for a new tax on land for maintaining these works arose from a novel distinction which the Government of Lord Lytton made between public works of provincial and general utility. It was said that works of provincial utility were not works of general usefulness, and that, therefore, they should be charged to provincial fund, and not to the Imperial. And as these canals were constructed in Bengal, so the Local, and not the Imperial, Government should meet their cost. Such was the argument used in 1877 by Sir John Strachey, the then Finance Minister, and cheerfully accepted by Sir Ashley Eden, the then Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal.

### A STRIKING BOON.

Well, what happened was this. An English Company under the name of the Orissa Irrigation Company started the Orissa and Midnapur canals, and the project proved a dead failure. The Government of India purchased these canals from them at a price which nobody in his senses would have paid: indeed, the Company would have had ultimately no option but to part with their property for a mere song if the Government had not so generously come to their rescue at the cost of the helpless tax-payers of India. Having purchased these and started a few new canals, spending in

this connection, about four crores of rupees, the Government threw the burden of maintaining them on the people of Bengal! The Local Government was not consulted in this transaction ; but after the completion of the works, when it was found that they did not pay not only the interest on the capital invested but even its working expenses, this valuable "Imperial" property was made over to Bengal after being dubbed "Provincial," and Sir Ashley Eden accepted the gift with good many thanks!

#### FROM 27 TO 54 LAKHS.

The fiat next came from Sir John Strachey that "my honourable friend Mr. Eden" must find 27 lakh and 50 thousand rupees in Bengal for nourishing this costly white elephant ; and Mr. Eden, whose advent in Bengal as its ruler was welcomed with enthusiasm by the people, showed his love to the latter by not only saddling them with a tax on land, but providing in his bill for 30 lakhs instead of 27½! And from 30 lakhs the Cess proceeds gradually swelled to 53 lakhs per annum and the amount was expended for 35 years upon the maintenance of a losing concern which was legitimately a charge on the imperial fund, but which was fastened on the Government of Bengal without rhyme or reason. In this way something like fifteen crores of rupees were realised from the people of Bengal during the last three decades and half and wasted upon public works which did not benefit them in the least ; and which were forced on them against their wish.



THE TWO PRINCIPAL MAINSTAYS.

If I have taken so much of your time in dealing with this subject, it is owing to the fact that these two cess funds are the chief mainstays for restoring our villages to their former state of health and prosperity. If the Cess proceeds had been properly applied from the very beginning malaria, plague, and cholera would perhaps not have made their permanent home in this province. The first duty of the non-official members of the Local Legislative Councils is to see that every rupee of these local rates is devoted to such objects as the better drainage of villages and the supply of water in rural tracts for drinking and other purposes and the inauguration of such other sanitary measures as will protect the tens of millions in the interior from the ruinous effects of maladies which, though carrying devastation all along the line, are yet preventible if sufficient funds be available to combat with them seriously.

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## On Chowkidari Tax

(The following note on the Chaukidari Tax was appended by Babu Moti Lal Ghose to his Presidential Address at the Bengal Provincial Conference at Krishnagar in 1915.)

From time immemorial the Choukidar or village watchman had been a servant of the village ; and either the Zemindars or some influential villagers used to control him. Like the barber to the village community, the Chowkidar had a specific share in the village lands and a quota of their produce for his maintenance, while his duty was to guard the village against thieves and burglars. This arrangement was continued by the British Government and the Choukidari lands were reserved as public assets by Regulation I of 1793. The advantage derived from this arrangement was very great ; it made the Choukidar a component unit of the village society a sharer of the village prosperity and a fellow-sufferer in times of adversity.

### CHOWKIDARS CONVERTED INTO CONSTABLES.

In spite of the repeated official attempts to have an entire control over the Chowkidars, the latter remained the private servants of the village community till 1891. In 1870, the Government passed an act by which it imposed a tax called the Chowkidari-tax upon the villagers for the maintenance of village watchmen to be assessed and collected by the village Panchayet.

The case now stands thus: by the Chowkidari Act of 1892 the Choukidars have been incorporated with the

regular police. While the villagers have been compelled to give up their control over them, they have, at the same time, not been relieved of the charge of maintaining them as before.

### WHAT JUSTICE AND LAW DEMAND.

Justice and law require that the Government should adopt either of these two courses. If it will not relieve the villagers of maintaining the Choukidars, it must leave the latter under the absolute control of those who find means for their maintenance. But if the Government wants to departmentalize the whole Choukidari force and bring it under one system, it must abolish the Choukidari tax and maintain the force just in the same manner as it maintains the regular police. As a matter of fact the Government is legally bound to maintain them from its own exchequer as there is a law on the subject ; the Government cannot ignore the law without breaking a promise of its own. In short, the Chowkidari Tax is illegal: both the general and the village police should be maintained from the proceeds of the stamp duty. Lord Cornwallis gave this pledge (vide Regulation 7 of 1797) as distinctly as the pledge regarding the Permanent Settlement.

### CRUEL NATURE OF THE CHOUKIDARI TAX.

Previously, the produce of the Choukidari Chakran lands supported the Choukidars. They were thus practically no burden on the villagers, as they shared with the people the prosperity or the adversity

## THE CRUEL NATURE OF THE TAX

of the season. But the direct nature of the tax imposed in 1890 and its collection in cash, instead of in kind, pressed dreadfully upon the rural population. This led to the creation of a body of men called the "Punchaits," whose principal business was to assess and collect the tax from the villagers on the commission system and pay the Chowkidars regularly and supervise their work. The Choukidars and Punchaits, however, became terrible engines of oppression in the hands of the Head Constable and the Sub-Inspector and a change became inevitable.

Now a few words as regards the cruel nature of the tax. In England incomes below Rs. 2,000 are not taxed. Even the income-tax in India does not affect those who have an income below Rs. 1,000, but the Choukidari tax touches the pocket of almost every man or woman in the interior of Bengal, who has a hovel to live in, though he or she may be starving. The nature and incidence of assessment will be clearly understood from Sec. 15 of the Choukidari Act of 1892, which lays down that every inhabitant of a village in Bengal who can pay 2 pice per month or 6d. per annum is bound to pay the tax! Is there any country in the world where taxation has reached such low incomes? Thousands of people in Bengal who perhaps live on scanty meals have to bear the load of this iniquitous impost without deriving any benefit from it.

## THE SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM.

In view of the circumstances noted above the only solution of the question seems to be the entire abolition

of the Choukidari tax. That was also the view of the late Sir Edward Baker, who made a strong representation to the Government of India to that effect, mainly on two grounds: first, on account of the unduly oppressive character of the tax; and secondly because, the Choukidari tax does not obtain in any other province of India. In that case the Choukidars must cease to exist and villages should be protected in the same way by the regular police as the mofussil municipal towns are now protected.

### HOW THE TAX TO BE APPLIED.

If the tax, however, is retained, I would suggest its utilisation in the same way as the police tax was directed to be utilised in municipalities under the Ripon Government Letter No. 3513, dated the 10th October 1881, addressed to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal. Para 4 of this letter contains the following order:—

“His Excellency in Council observes that at present the total annual amount, spent on Police by municipalities, in British India, amounts to about 27½ lakhs of rupees. The only function which the municipalities discharge in regard to police, is the provision of funds for the purpose of meeting the whole, or a portion of the cost of the municipal police force. They practically exercise no control over the police, and cannot therefore be expected to take any special interest in the efficiency of the force, or to look with sympathy on a provision of the law which treats them as a machinery for raising

## HOW THE TAX SHOULD BE APPLIED

taxes to be spent on a department over which they have no control and in the efficient and economical expenditure of which they have but little direct interest and no immediate responsibility. The Governor-General in Council would, therefore, be glad to see municipal bodies, relieved altogether of the charge for police, and equal amount of expenditure on education, medical charity and, if possible, public works of local interest being transferred to them with as full control as may be practically expedient over the details of such expenditure."

The principle laid down in the Government of India's letter, quoted above, applies exactly to the case of the village watch and the rural population. The villagers exercise no control whatever over the Choukidars and the only functions they discharge in regard to them is the provision of funds for the purpose of maintaining them. Under these circumstances the rural, like the urban, population should be relieved altogether of the charge for village police, the income derived from the Choukidari tax being devoted, as in the case of municipalities, to such works of improvement as village sanitation, village drainage, village water-supply, village dispensaries and so forth.

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## Reforms of Existing Machinery

(The following note on the reforms of the then existing machinery from the Union Committee to the Provincial Council was appended by Babu Moti Lal Ghose to his Presidential Address at the Bengal Provincial Conference at Krishnagar in 1915.)

Our two existing village organisations are the Chowkidari Panchayat and the Union Committee. I am for their amalgamation. They should be re-organised by the people themselves on the elective principle and without much official help. An officer, who should be more non-official than official in his attitude like the Registrar of the Co-operative Credit Societies, may, however, be temporarily employed to put them into line with modern institutions of similar character of Western countries. The main functions of the Amalgamated Union Committees should be (a) to take charge of the Chowkidars and the Chowkidari tax if they are at all to be retained ; and (b) to improve village sanitation and village education. They should be placed under the Subdivisional Board or the District Board. As for funds, a portion of the Cess money should be made over to them. I have no sympathy with the provision of voluntary taxation embodied in the Local Self-Government Act, for, in the name of taxing themselves, it gives the Union Committee an opportunity to tax the poor villagers and make the organisation an engine of oppression to the latter.

## MUNICIPALITIES AND DISTRICT BOARDS

### THE MUFFASIL MUNICIPALITY.

Under the existing arrangement, two-thirds of the members of the Muffasil Municipalities are elected and one-third nominated. I should insist on the proportion between the elected and the nominated members being now changed to three-fourths and one-fourth, considering that Municipal towns in the Muffasil are inhabited by a large number of highly educated men, and also considering that a quarter of a century has passed since the two-third concession was made. The chief complaint against the smooth working of Municipalities is official interference. This should be minimised to a vanishing point.

### THE DISTRICT BOARD.

The main objects of the District Board, constituted under the Local Self-Government Resolution of the Ripon Administration, were (1) to give relief to the over-worked District Officer ; and (2) to confer the privilege of administering the affairs of the district upon representative men. Neither of these purposes has been fulfilled ; so not only does the constitution of the Board require change but its functions need also to be extended. The proportion of its elected members to the nominated should also be, as suggested in the case of the Municipality, three-fourths to one-fourth. The District Officer should be relieved of the duties of Chairman and replaced by an elected non-official as a rule. More money and more serious work and responsibility should be entrusted to the Board. I want to draw the



attention of all parties concerned to the following significant passage in the Local Self-Government resolution of Lord Ripon:

“Not only should every Board have the entire control over the proceeds of local rates and cesses levied within its jurisdiction for its own special purposes, but along with it, the charge of any expenditure that is at present Provincial should be transferred where possible,

And the Government of Lord Ripon further suggested that the License Tax, which has now been supplanted by the Income Tax, might be made over to these Boards. The functions of the District Boards may thus be expanded by placing at their disposal, in addition to the Road Cess, the Public Works Cess, the Ferries and the Pounds, such additional sources of revenue as the Income Tax and the Chowkidari Tax. Again such funds as Trust Funds, deposited in the treasury, may also be handed over to the Board. It should be remembered that unless sufficient funds, or rather sources of income, as well as real responsibilities are placed in the hands of the Board, it is bound to fail in attaining its original objects.

### PROVINCIAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Now a few words on the ‘reformed’ Provincial Legislative Council. As you are aware, so long as its constitution is based on the principle of class or commercial interests it cannot be called a representative assembly. The special electorate is not only a wrong in itself, but

it paves the way, as a rule, for legislation by mediocrity. If we have yet some of our ablest men in the Provincial Council it is in spite of the Councils regulations and is due more to chance than anything else.

When the Morley-Minto reform scheme was before the public in 1909, I took the liberty of submitting a scheme before the Government for constituting both the Local and Imperial Councils. I had long conversations with the late Sir Edward Baker and Sir Herbert Risley on the subject. They could find no flaw in my scheme, but they pleaded their inability to accept and recommend it on the ground that it would create discontent among an influential section of the Mahomedans. There was, however, nothing in the scheme to offend our Mussalman brethren ; on the other hand, all Hindus and Mussalmans should have supported it, its object being to secure the best men of the country, irrespective of their creed or caste, as our councillors. Here is a short summary of that scheme so far as it relates to the Bengal Council.

The existing District Boards and Municipalities now form the machinery for returning members to the Local Legislative Council from groups of districts comprising Divisions. But they are more official than popular bodies and do not represent the voice of all classes of the district population. So, what is needed is to make them less official and more representative in the way I have suggested above.

Now here was the principle laid down by the Minto Government in their Council Reform Despatch and accepted by Lord Morley. "You justly observe," said

the late Secretary of State addressing Lord Minto, that "the principle to be borne in mind is that the election by the wishes of the people is the ultimate object to be secured, whatever may be the actual machinery adopted for giving effect to it." This means that all classes of the people, that is, the people as a whole, should have at least some voice in the election of their representatives to the Legislative Council. No "special" electorate can serve this purpose—it can represent the wishes of only a particular class. Lord Morley's Electoral College also had its drawbacks. The method suggested below, however, not only embodies the wishes of the people as a whole, but is based on the two existing electorates, thereby saving the Government from the immense trouble of creating any new constituencies.

In Bengal we have an Act to constitute any village or group of villages into an Union. The Union Committee under this Act, consists of five to nine members, to be elected by the residents of a village or a number of villages. These five to nine members will thus be the regularly elected representatives of all classes of people residing in a village or villages.

If there be, say, 50 such Union Committees in a sub-division, let the majority of their members elect, say, 15 members for the Local or Sub-divisional Board. There are, generally speaking, four Sub-divisional Boards in a district. Let the elected members of these four Boards elect, say, twenty qualified men from the districts to serve on the District Board.

The twenty men thus elected will necessarily represent not only the interests of the district population

## A SCHEME OF REFORMS

as a whole, but of the majorities and the minorities alike, as the Union Committees which are the starting point, voice every shade of opinion in the rural life of the district. And who can deny that the member, elected by these twenty men or the majority of them, would be the best party to represent the interests of all the diverse elements in the district population in the local Legislative Council? Lord Morley was strongly of opinion that the village community should be the starting point of public life in India ; well, our scheme is based exactly on that principle.

While all the rural interests are thus, directly or remotely, represented in the District Board, the Municipalities will be representative of all the urban interests in the district. The elected members of the District Boards and the Municipalities might therefore be deemed to be the best electors in the matter of electing district or divisional representatives to the local Council, each member having a personal vote in the final elections.

In short, the elected members of the Union Committees should elect the members of the Local Boards and the elected members of the Local Boards those of the Districts Boards. The elected members of District and Municipal Boards should, in their turn, jointly or alternately, elect the district or divisional members to the Local Legislative Councils.

The above scheme is intended only for the people in the interior. One or more electorate on popular lines should also be constituted to enable the leaders residing in Calcutta, having no landed or municipal interests in

## REFORMS OF EXISTING MACHINERY

the Muffasil, to enter the Council. For the purpose the established public bodies in the city may be utilized.

### OTHER REFORMS.

The Legislative Council to be really useful ought to have a distinct body of non-official majority who should be given some substantial power. The privilege of asking questions and moving resolutions has no doubt its value, but it means very little so long the representative members have no potent voice in the deliberations. I suggested to Sir Edward Baker that a provision to the following effect should be embodied in the reform scheme, namely, that when the majority of the elected members unanimously voted for or against the disbursement of any public money, their decision should be binding on the Government. His reply was that we must wait for fifteen years more before we could expect to get it. There is, however, no doubt that so long the representative members have no tangible control over the finance and the administration of the districts, the Legislative Council will evoke no enthusiasm in the popular mind.

### THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.

As at present constituted it is only a costly luxury. So long the Provincial Executive Council is not composed of two Indians elected by the representative members of a reformed Legislative Council, so long it is not of the slightest advantage to the country.

## Jam vs. 'Sandesh'

(By BABU MOTI LAL GHOSE.)

(*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 1917).

There is enough of ham but very little jam for the use of the European community in this country. Indeed, they are threatened with a jam famine on account of the war and there is consternation among them. To avert this calamity, a brilliant and influential meeting was held on Friday evening in the Writers' Buildings under the presidency of the Hon. Sir Henry Wheeler. From the proceedings of the meeting already published in these columns, one will see the gravity of the situation and how the higher class European residents here have been alarmed over the matter.

Said Sir Lindsay moving a resolution, that one of the chief objects of the proposed Food Products Exhibition should be the manufacture of this article. This is all right and we wish the promoters every success. But we wonder that Mr. Justice Chowdhury and Sir Rajendra Nath Mukherjee and Lady Mukherjee should take such lively interest in the business, and their mouths should water for jam, when we have got enough of that celestial sweet among us, the "Sandesh", which has no parallel in the world. This is all the more surprising as they are Brahmins and this is their special food. How fallen we must be to long for 'jam' in the land of 'Sandesh'!

Let us not be misunderstood. We do not disparage the merit of 'jam'—each according to his taste ; but we would not be true to ourselves if we were to keep the fact concealed, specially when grand efforts are going to be made by many high personages to manufacture 'jam', that our 'Sandesh' is far superior to it, and we say this with confidence as we have tasted both. We can guarantee that Sir Ashutosh and Sir Rajendranath and Lady Mukherjee are thoroughly with us in this matter, unless their taste has been thoroughly vitiated. We would, therefore, ask the promoters of the movement to give 'Sandesh' a fair trial before they enter upon their new enterprise.

In the meantime we may be permitted to write a short dissertation on 'Sandesh'. During the last exhibition in England, an enterprising exhibitor engaged the services of some Indian "mithaiwallas" and thereby introduced Indian sweets before an English gathering. History says that the confectionary which most touched the fancy of the British epicures was "jillapie." It was stated at the time that the Indian confectioners found it difficult to meet the demand for hot 'jillapie'. Hot 'jillapie' in a cold country is no doubt delicious, but what is 'jillapie' when compared to 'Sandesh'?

To the question what 'Sandesh' is, the reply is, as we have said above, it is the best delicacy in the world—is "fit for gods and the noble race of the Bengalis". It is prepared only from curd ('chhana') and sugar, but its flavour is simply indescribable. It is quite possible that some Europeans have tasted it, as a reward for keeping the good company of the noble race of Bengalis.

## CAN FORGET 'GAYATREE' BUT NOT 'SANDESH'

When the late distinguished Rev. K. M. Bannerjee became a Christian and subsequently a missionary, he gave up everything Hindu. He delighted in meat, nay, in abominations, the very sight of which would have led his forefathers to go to Benares on foot for purification. But Mr. Bannerjee could not give up 'Sandesh'. "Is Bhola 'moyra' of Sovabazar ('Moyra' is the 'Sandesh' maker) still alive?"—asked Mr. Bannerjee one day to the writer. "If he is not dead," he added, "please bring me some 'Sandesh' from his shop when you come again." So, you see, he succeeded in forgetting his Dōrga and Kali, nay, his 'Gayatree', the sacred 'Mantra' of the Brahmins, but he could not forget the 'Sandesh' of Bhola Moyra.

When any European gentleman pays us a visit and we have to offer him refreshments we put a plate of 'Sandesh' before him. Poor Mr. Fredrick Pincott, that generous benefactor of the weak—that beloved friend of the Indians—is dead and is no doubt in the highest heaven now. Though a Tory, he was more liberal than many so-called Liberals. He was a well-known linguist in England and knew many Indian languages. He rebuked the Bengalis for having adopted blank verse. He said that when the Bengali language had such an abundance of rhyming words, it was a folly on the part of Bengali poets to use blank verse.

But we are talking of better things, at least of more substantial things than poetry. When Mr. Pincott first came to us we offered him 'Sandesh'. He did not know what it was, but trusting us he put one in his mouth, and we watched with interest how it would affect him.



His face beamed with delight and tears glistened down his cheeks, and he lost his power of speech. We asked him how he liked our 'Sandesh'. He could not utter a word for some time. He, however, overcame his emotion and declared that "it is a food only fit for the gods and the noble race of Bengalis." So these words which we have used above are not ours but are coiped from an orthodox Englishman belonging to the Tory party.

Another friend, a famous M.P.—the late Mr. W. S. Caine—who was a guest of the late Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee—was similarly treated by us with 'Sandesh', and even more powerfully affected. He was not as emotional as Mr. Pincott but more practical. He emptied the plate placed before him in no time and wanted more. When his plate was refilled he had his fill. But he wanted another plateful of 'Sandesh', this time for another object ; he filled his big pockets with the sweets to eat them at home! Mr. Bonnerjee was very angry with us—he complained that we had done wrong in tempting our friend to derange his stomach by taking too much of it. Now it is no fault of the 'Sandesh', if it disturbs the stomach, when taken in a large quantity. We think anyone would injure his stomach, if he were to take too much of even ambrosia. By the way, tears of ecstasy actually trickled down his cheeks when Mr. Caine gulped down his 'Sandesh' one after another.

We tried the experiment also with a distinguished American—Mr. Bryan—and with equal success. He had his lunch one day at our place when he was in

## REPLY TO "STATESMAN"

Calcutta and he was so delighted with 'Sandesh' that we gave him that he took a recipe of its preparation from us.

Here are the testimonies of at least three distinguished Westerners as to the excellence of our 'Sandesh'. A Viceroy or a Governor is treated with royal honour in India. He sees here many sights and enjoys many pleasures. But his stay here is hardly of any avail if he lives the shores of India without tasting 'Sandesh'. 'Jam' is no doubt good, but nothing like 'Sandesh'.

(The above article was published in the year 1917. The 'Statesman' commented on it to which Babu Motilal Ghose gave the following reply.)

The adage in this country is 'diamond cuts diamond and wit appreciates wit.' There is a wit-cracker on the staff of the "Statesman" whose remarks in the columns of "Here and There" are sometimes a source of genuine pleasure to many. He is now and then hard on us, but we have no complaint against him as there is no malice in what he writes. Nay, occasionally he is even generous enough to say a good word about the vapourings of the wit-cracker on our staff, though the editorial duels of the "Amrita" and the "Statesman" sometimes remind one of the fight between the mongoose and the cobra. The "Statesman" wit-cracker apparently appreciates our article on "Jam vs. Sandesh" and makes the following remarks:—

"The 'A. B. Patrika' writes daily on the shortcomings of the Government and on the rapidity with which India is going to the bow-wows. Once a year, however, it drops these themes

## 'JAM VS. 'SANDESH'.

and turns to the pleasanter subject of "Sandesh", or Bengal toffee. Its annual leader on 'Sandesh' comes off this morning, and one cannot help thinking it is a pity that this succulent subject does not fill the bill a little oftener. Why not write about the Government once a year, and enthuse about the 'Sandesh' the rest of the time?"

The suggestion is excellent and we can make an attempt to act up to it if the ruling authorities would agree to do one thing: let them remain engaged from year's end to year's end in manufacturing and eating 'jam', and let the representatives of the people carry on the administration of the country. But we all know they will never accept this proposition, for though they are fond of 'jam', their love for the Defence of India Act is greater. Indeed, many officials would lose their appetite even for 'jam' if they were robbed of the pleasure of lording it over the Indians like autocrats. Jam is sweet, but power is sweeter by far.

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# A Life-Sketch of Mr. C. R. Das

(Written in 1918).

In a foreword to the book "India for Indians", which was a collection of speeches by the late C. R. Das, Babu Moti Lal Ghose said:

"Personally I have known Mr. Chittaranjan Das from the days of his youth. His father, the late Babu Bhūban Mohan Das was a friend of mine. Bhuban Mohan was a well-known Attorney of the Calcutta High Court. For some time he was connected also with Bengalee journalism. As editor, first, of the "Brahmo Public Opinion" and subsequently of the "Bengal Public Opinion", he made a very high position for himself among Bengalee journalists. His style was very simple, and he spoke with a directness that was rather rare in our more successful English weeklies of those days. Babu Bhuban Mohan was a sincere patriot, and though like good many English educated Bengalees of his generation, he threw himself heart and soul into the Brahmo Samaj Movement, in his personal life and more particularly in his dealings with his Hindu relatives, he belonged to the old Hindu type, and spent whatever he earned, and he earned a lot for the support of his poorer relatives. Indeed he spent upon them more than his finance allowed and consequently got involved in heavy liabilities that forced him, during the closing years of his professional life to take refuge in the Insolvency Court.

Chitta Ranjan was educated, I think, in the London Missionary College, Bhowanipore, and subsequently in the Presidency College, Calcutta, whence he took his B.A. degree and went to England to qualify himself for the Indian Civil Service. I do not remember if he actually competed for the I. C. S. He joined the Inns of Court and was called to the Bar in the early nineties.

Chitta Ranjan gave considerable promise of exceptional literary and oratorical gifts even when he was a student in the Presidency College, Calcutta. While in England he made some political speeches, in connection, I think, with the Electioneering Campaign of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, and some of these speeches were very favourably noticed by the English and the Indian Press.

Upon his return home, and within a short time of his joining the Calcutta Bar, he took upon himself the responsibility of all his father's debts ; an act that forced him at the very commencement of his professional career to join his father in seeking the protection of the Insolvency Court. It was not only filial duty, but a point of honour, with Chitta Ranjan to share the indignity with his father. He was very seriously handicapped both in his professional and in his public life, by this insolvency. But for it, Chitta Ranjan would have long ago publicly thrown himself into all our political and patriotic movements and won the position of leadership to which he was entitled by his capacity and his devoted love for his country.

• Though his exceptional abilities were universally recognised, from the very beginning of his career as a member of our High Court Bar, he could not secure adequate scope for them for a good many years ; his pecuniary struggles forced him to abandon the chances of a successful practice in the High Court for the mofussil practice which is more profitable to a junior Barrister.

The celebrated Conspiracy Case against Srijut Aravinda Ghose, in which he appeared as Aravinda's Counsel pushed Chitta Ranjan into the forefront of the Calcutta Bar. Great was the sacrifice that he made in undertaking this defence. For more than six months he was engaged in this case, and the fee that he received was not sufficient to meet even all his household expenses during these months ; and he had to incur a large debt for this purpose. The acquittal of Aravinda at once raised the reputation of his Counsel, and from the very day that Chitta Ranjan came back to take up the broken threads of his High Court practice, he found himself on the high road to both fame and wealth. This reminds me of the saying of Sree Bhagavan in the Geeta—that the doer of good never comes to any grief.

As soon as he found his position in his profession secure, Chitta Ranjan's first thought was to remove the stain of insolvency from his father's name and his own and he started to pay every pie of those old debts. This is the first time, as Mr. Justice Fletcher declared, that a discharged insolvent publicly accepted his old liabilities and applied for a formal discharge of his

insolvency. This act of unusual fidelity to his financial obligations, at once raised Chitta Ranjan Das to the position of a great moral hero.

Having secured his discharge from his insolvency, Chitta Ranjan found himself free to freely and openly join all our public activities and as the new National Life in Bengal, denied free scope and outlet in politics by the restrictive legislations of Lord Minto, had commenced to seek and find expression in a variety of literary organisations, Chitta Ranjan threw himself into this Nationalist Movement, and soon found himself among its great leaders. In 1915 he started a new Bengalee Monthly, the "Narayana", which secured for its contributors some of the highest litterateurs of Bengal including Mahamahopadhaya Hara Prasad Sastri who has a European reputation, and Babu Bepin Chandra Pal. Chittaranjan's entry into Bengalee literature dates from 1894 or 1895 when he published a volume of Bengalee lyrics, called "Malancha" which introduced a new element of freedom and realism into our modern lyrical literature. During the last two years, two more volumes of lyrics have been published by him. The last annual Literary Conference of Bengal, in recognition of his literary services, nominated Chitta Ranjan as the President of its Literary Section while the political leaders of the Province offered him an equal recognition by asking him to preside over our last Provincial Conference.

Mr. C. R. Das, though yet young, is already an esteemed and prominent leader of Bengal. His patriotism is genuine ; his abilities are unquestioned.

## MR. DAS' QUALIFICATIONS

Self-seeking is not in his line. He tries to serve his motherland according to his light, not for his own aggrandisement but for her welfare alone. He is above official frowns or favours—his independence is fearless. He is not a pushing man yet his talent has pushed him forward to a foremost place both in his profession and the political field. He earns a good deal of money but perhaps spends more. His charities are many though the general public know very little of them. He has a fine heart, which is ever ready to help a fellow in distress, even at a considerable personal sacrifice. If he does not convert himself into a mere money-making machine like many worthy members of his profession, he is bound to prove a tower of strength to the national cause. He is a Home Ruler and a democrat of democrats, every inch of him. To me he is specially dear, as he is devotee of Sri Krishna and Sri Gauranga. As his father's friend, I have the privilege of passing benediction on him. May God grant him a long and healthy life and enable him to devote it unselfishly to the service of man and his maker.

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# Romance of An Indian Newspaper

(By Late Moti Lal Ghose.)

(The following article written by the Late Babu Moti Lal Ghose in March, 1921 gives in a narrow compass the early history and career of the "Amrita Bazar Patrika".)

From to-day the A. B. Patrika will be published in its present form. This arrangement will enable us not only to add nine or ten columns of more reading matter but also to find spaces for advertisements for which we cannot now make room without encroaching further on the reading matter.

A few years ago Mr. Boulger delivered an address in London, his subject being "The Romance of an English paper" to show how the "Daily Mail" rose from small beginnings to its present eminence. He said that the "Daily Mail" at that time cost £1,500 a day and that the bill for the printing paper alone was £180,000 a year. Of course this cost must have doubled or trebled now considering the famine price of paper after the World War. But is the public aware that this humble journal, the "Amrita Bazar Patrika" has also a romance of its own, a romance which is perhaps more thrilling than that of the "Daily Mail" or any other paper in the world? We hope our good readers will forgive us if we touch upon a chapter of personal history considering that the

writer has played his legitimate part in it, however insignificant that may be.

Any visitor to the workshop of the Patrika of the present day will possibly be a little impressed with its Lino-type and printing machines worked both by electric and a gas motor power ; but its origin was humble enough, nay, of the humblest description. Mr. Boulger does not state the amount of capital, undoubtedly very large, with which the "Daily Mail" was started ; but the "Patrika" cost its founders only Rs. 240/- when they ushered it into existence.

This is how the Patrika first made its appearance. An enterprising man living in Ahiritola, Calcutta had purchased printing materials to carry on printing business. He failed in his venture and died soon after. His widow thereupon wanted to dispose of them. These materials were purchased and carried to "Amrita Bazar", a small village in the District of Jessore. The most valuable of these materials was the printing press, a wooden one, called the Balein Press which cost Rs. 32/-. It was set up with the help of the village carpenter and the cases with worn-out types were placed on their stands. In this way a printing workshop was established at the village of Amrita Bazar.

Those who did all these had however to learn the business of printing in Calcutta and when they started the "Patrika" they had to hold the composing sticks and set their articles in types and also to print the sheets themselves. In short even when a few men of the village had been trained, the proprietors themselves

had to do the work of compositor, press man and editor, so long they remained at "Amrita Bazar", which was their native village.

Besides holding the composing sticks and pulling the press for printing the journal they had to cast rollers and types, prepare matrices and manufacture ink. In paper making they failed but they manufactured fine ink. The matrices and types were poor products though they were utilized in times of urgent need.

The paper they started was a weekly in the Bengali language. It came out in March 1868 consisting of only 2½ small (Crown) sheets of paper. They named it the "Amrita Bazar Patrika"—"Amrita" meaning nectar, "Bazar", market and "Patrika", journal, that is to say A. B. P. was a paper which distributed nectar or honey. "Amrita" has, however, another significance, namely "aconite" or poison. So the "Amrita Bazar Patrika" was a paper which in the opinion of its proprietors purveyed both nectar and poison—nectar to the right-minded and poison to the wrong-headed people.

The paper began by preaching a strange doctrine, namely, "We are we" and "They are they." This alarmed the authorities very much ; for in those days the Indian newspapers never dared or cared to say that the people had their own separate rights and entities from those of their rulers. When the paper was only four months old it published an article against a European Sub-Divisional Officer, Mr. Wright, which was considered libellous ; and the proprietors, the conductors and the printer were hauled up on a charge of

criminal defamation before Messrs. Monro and O'Keanily, the former being the District Magistrate and the latter the Jt. Magistrate of Jessore. The case created a great sensation and all the executive authorities from the Lieutenant Governor down to the Police Superintendent took the keenest interest in it with a view to crush the paper by sending its proprietors to jail. For eight months they dragged its slow length along, the Bengal Government taking a very active part in the prosecution as if it itself was defamed. In the end the proprietors were all but ruined as they had to part with a portion of their patrimony to meet the cost of the defence. It was the late Mr. Monomohan Ghose who defended the "Patrika", perhaps that was his first case. The printer and the writer of the alleged libel were convicted and sent to jail, the former for 6 and the latter for 12 months. But the proprietors in spite of the earnest efforts of the authorities, escaped.

The threatening attitude of the local authorities and the outbreak of a virulent type of malaria, however, compelled the proprietors to leave their native village and shift to this city, where they were perfect strangers, with only Rs. 100/- in pocket borrowed from a kind neighbour at 25% interest. That was in 1871. For about three months they did not know what to do and the publication of the paper remained suspended. They, however started it again in March 1871 and the success was unexpected and immediate. Some of the political cartoons that appeared in its columns—the "Patrika" was the first to introduce cartoons in political contro-

versy in this country)—created great stir and established its position on a firm basis.

When the Gaekwar Mulhar Rao was deposed and put on his trial, this journal was made a diglot, that is to say half English and half vernacular and an English edition of the paper was largely circulated under the name of "Overland Patrika" in Bombay and other provinces. It was by this means that the way was paved for the establishment of an All India Political Organization like the National Congress. The "Patrika" took a leading and somewhat risky part in the agitation that was started in connexion with the deposition of the Gaekwar with the result that every preparation was made by Government to prosecute it on a charge of sedition. When, however, the matter was referred to Lord Hobhouse, the then Law Member of the Government of India, for opinion he advised the latter not to proceed against the "Patrika" on the following grounds:—(1) The prosecution would create more sedition. (2) As the "Patrika" was a very popular All India and not a mere provincial paper, the prosecution would convulse the whole of India. (3) The case would be tried by a jury and if the jury acquitted the "Patrika" the prestige of the Government would grievously suffer. This was in 1878 during the Viceroyalty of Lord Northbrooke. The contemplated prosecution was not pushed further and the "Patrika" escaped a formidable state-trial.

Lord Northbrooke's successor, Lord Lytton, however did a great service to this journal by his Vernacular Press Act, though it was forged for its destruction. The

provisions of that Act applied not only to a newspaper conducted in oriental languages but also to the English columns of a diglot. The measure was passed at one sitting of the Council and the "Patrika" immediately appeared completely in English garb to evade the clutches of this gagging act. The achievement created great sensation in the country and caused consternation and gnashing of teeth in the bureaucratic dovecot. As a thorough English Weekly it was beyond the jurisdiction of the Act and so it went its way merrily, defying the bureaucracy and continuing to make them lose their sleep and appetite every Thursday week after week.

Like the Press Act of Lord Lytton the Age of Consent measure of Lord Landsdowne also gave this journal a lift. The only Hindu daily paper ("The Indian Mirror") of the period went over to the side of the Government and gave strong support to the bill. The people keenly felt the need of a national daily and the weekly "Patrika" was converted into a daily in 1891. We were advised, when we intended to take this jump not to enter upon this risky venture without a capital of at least a lac of rupees ; but this was against the traditions of the "Patrika". So we converted the weekly into a daily without any capital and from the very beginning the undertaking began to pay its own expenses.

If the "Patrika" had its reverses, it had its achievements also. If we mention some of these it is not in self-glorification but to show how an Indian journal, however humble, with a halter round its neck

and constantly fighting with the authorities can do many useful things if it be honest, single minded, unselfish and fearlessly independent. The "Patrika" was an eyesore to the bureaucracy and Sir Lepel Griffin was perhaps the most powerful bureaucrat of his time. It was he who placed Amir Abdur Rahaman on his throne at Kabul. For having done this great work he was appointed Agent to the Governor-General in Central India and became the master of over one hundred rulers of Indian states. He was generally called the "maker and keeper of kings." He was so powerful that even Viceroys trembled before him.

With this great auto-crat of autocrats the "Patrika" had to try conclusions and came out victorious. The Begum of Bhopal was one of his victims. Sir Lepel had practically ousted her from her Gadi and arranged to deport her and her husband to Rangoon. Just at this psychological moment the "Patrika's" help was sought for her rescue ; and not only did it save her from the clutches of her cruel persecutor but compelled him to leave this country for good bag and baggage. Sir Lepel was so disgusted with the conduct of a tiny foe like the "Patrika" that he asked the Government of India either to prosecute the journal for its attacks on him or to accept his resignation. Lord Dufferin, the then Viceroy, to his utter surprise, refused to prosecute this journal and Sir Lepel had no other alternative than to tender his resignation which was promptly accepted. He retired home a wiser, if not, a sadder man. The Begum offered large sums of money to the proprietors of the "Patrika" for their services. Indeed in one of her

letters to them she wrote "my hoards are at your disposal." They, however, declined to take a rupee from her. They might have been millionaires but they preferred the approval of their conscience which forbade them to touch the money of one who was in trouble. The "Patrika" has never served an aggrieved party for pay.

In the same manner the "Patrika" succeeded in restoring the deposed Maharaja of Kashmir to his Gadi by its persistent and vigorous agitation in co-operation with the late Mr. Bradlaugh and Mr. Digby. The Gilgit incident convulsed the whole of India. When Lord Lansdowne forced the Maharaja of Kashmir to abdicate his throne, the "Patrika" furiously attacked his Government. What Lord Lansdowne did in return was to bring discredit upon this journal by announcing at a meeting of his council that the "Patrika" had abused him and his government because it was a wicked paper, for if he had deposed the Maharaja it was not in the interest of the British Government but for the good of the people of that State who were horribly oppressed by their ruler. Immediately after this declaration the "Patrika" published in its columns a State paper known as the Gilgit Document which not only made the Viceroy tear his own beard but brought a serious attack of enteric fever upon the then Foreign Secretary Sir H. M. Durand through whose negligence the document saw the light of day. This document revealed in its crude nakedness the real motive of the Government in compelling the Maharaja of Kashmir to give up his throne. In short, it disclosed the ugly fact that the Government of India



was in urgent need of possessing the Gilgit Province of the Kashmir States and as the Maharaja would rather die than part with this valuable property, he was hurled down from his *gadi* by violent means.

Beyond sending us some customary thanks and declaring that "the editor of the 'Patrika' was his beloved brother in his previous birth", the Maharaja paid not a cowrie to the proprietors of this journal, nay, he did not present them even with a piece of Kahmir Shawl! The "Patrika" also did service to several other Indian States such as Rewa, Indore, Gwalior, Porbunder, etc.

The "Patrika" in its humble way did service in other directions also. It was the late Babu Shishir Kumar Ghose, the principal founder of this journal who secured the elective principle and a splendid constitution for the Corporation of Calcutta. That constitution which made over the civic affairs of the city entirely to the hands of its representative citizen was demolished by Lord Curzon. Lord Ripon after promulgating his famous local self-government resolution did not know how to proceed further in this matter. The "Patrika" showed the way in a series of articles and His Lordship in consultation with Babu Sishir Kumar Ghosh whom he regarded as an Indian sage was able to give the measure a practical shape. By bringing about the historical mass meeting at Jhinkargatcha in the early eighties of the last century which was attended by a lakh of raiyats, the proprietors of the "Patrika" were the first to prove the feasibility of holding large mass meetings in the mofussil of this country. We

enumerate all these mainly for the information of the younger generation who perhaps are absolutely ignorant of, or imperfectly acquainted with these facts.

At least two attempts were made by two Lieutenant Governors of Bengal, Sir George Campbell and Sir Ashley Eden, to make the "Patrika" a government organ. And the offers of subsidy from them came at a time when the proprietors were in a very bad way financially. Needless to say they rejected the proposal with firmness and scorn.

The "Patrika" began its life as a weekly with only two and half sheets of paper 'Crown' and now it is a daily consisting of two sheets and a half 'double demy.'

Is not this a move forward—a very big one? Further there is not a city, town or important village in India where it has not penetrated. In short it is now, one of the most widely circulated papers in the country. We claim no credit for this success. We attribute the success to the grace of a kind providence and to the love and affection of our good countrymen to serve whom is our duty, privilege, comfort and solace. We are confident that Providence will extend to us the same kindness in future which He has bestowed in the past, so long as the journal does not swerve from its path of duty and rectitude and devotes itself to the service of the mother country faithfully and unselfishly without expectation of any reward.

# How Sankaracharya Learnt Wisdom

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## Mohamudgar Slokas

(By MOTI LAL GHOSE.)

(The Amrita Bazar Patrika, June 11, 1922.)

Every Indian and every student of Indian philosophy know that Sankaracharya was one of the greatest of India's philosophers and ascetics. He knew not what worldly life was like, having become an ascetic when a young lad ; but he felt that for the purpose of a perfect discipline of his soul a thorough knowledge of the world, of political, social and domestic life, was necessary. He was standing with a couple of disciples on the banks of the Jumna near Allahabad, when the corpse of the king, who had just then died, was brought there for the purpose of cremation. He felt that that was a fine opportunity for him to accomplish his object, and addressed his disciples thus: "My children, I must live in society to learn by experience what it is like, and here is an opportunity. I shall enter into the dead body of this King and govern the kingdom for some time and shall come back when I have gathered knowledge necessary for my purpose. You in the meantime wait here and watch my body carefully till I come back."

His disciples bowed in acquiescence. "But," continued the philosopher, "I am told the world makes fools of wise men. Now suppose an exercise of absolute power turns my head; the enjoyment of animal pleasures vitiates my taste; and then what will become of me?" His disciples replied with clasped hands and bent heads: "My Lord, you who have brought the five senses under the toe of your left foot, you, who have brought irresistible nature under the sway of your still more irresistible will, can have no reason to fear the wiles of the world."

The ascetic replied: "Truly my children, I am very much afraid of the wiles of the world. I shall however leave an antidote with you. Here are a few 'slokas' (couplets) which please commit to memory and if you feel that I have been enchanted by the pleasures of the world, come and release me by uttering these couplets to me." These are the Mohamudgar Slokas which are committed to memory by every learned Hindu. 'Mudgar' means a club, and 'Moha' means hallucination (Maya). So these Slokas are called "iron clubs which break into pieces the hallucinations of men."

The saint then left his own body and entered that of the king who sat up. His disciples now carried his lifeless corpse to a hut close by where they began to watch it day and night by turns. The attendants of the king seeing that he was again alive carried him in triumph to his capital. The Ranees wept tears of joy and there was rejoicing throughout the empire.

The saint at first remained untouched by his surroundings. Worldly pleasures however began to exert

their influence. The ascetic began to slide down slowly and imperceptibly, and at last he came down to the level of ordinary humanity. His disciples waited long and patiently for the sage to come back to his body but he did not. Well, to make a long story short, the disciples at last found themselves before the king and then addressed him thus: "My Lord, it is high time for you to come back." The sage looked at them contemptuously and replied: "Avoid my sight, I am not going to change my position—it is so sweet. Burn my body and go away or if you like, stay with me and share my pleasures."

The amazed disciples knew not what to say. The sage Sankaracharya reduced to this! They clasped their hands and addressed the king, "Lord, the pleasures that you value are transient and were meant for animals and not human beings. You were a free man before, now you are a prisoner. You were a lord of the creation and you are a slave of others. You were a God before, now you are a brute."

The sage began to get uneasy, but his pride led him to conceal his uneasiness and he again declared; "Well, I know all that. They are the usual tale of fools, old women, dotards, and hypocrites."

The disciples then remembered the antidote and again addressed the sage in the body of the king; "Lord, we shall carry out your behests and utter the Slokas that you commanded us to commit to memory and repeat to you if you showed any weakness." The king had totally forgotten all about the Slokas which

he had himself composed, but he agreed out of curiosity, to listen to them.

And the disciples uttered his first couplet, the first line of which means,—“Life is as unsteady as a drop of water on a lotus leaf.”

The frame of the king began to shake. The disciples continued ; but we have no need to utter the Slokas here. Tears began to trickle down the cheeks of the saint. And at last he addressed his disciples, “Run to my body. You ought not to have left it unprotected. I am coming.” The king then fell down dead, and the body of the saint sat up,—a living man.

The rulers of India have now none to control them ; what is now to be their future? What will now guide their actions? How will they discriminate right from wrong, a friend from a foe? Well there are precepts of Jesus ; but they will not do here in India. He advocated conquest by goodness, by offering the right cheek when the left was struck, but the rulers will never agree to disband their mercenaries to please even Jesus Christ. Public opinion, the discontent of the people the rulers of India have now no longer any need to fear and practically Parliament has very little control over the affairs of India. Now the rulers of India who control the destiny of one-fifth of the human race, who have inexhaustible resources at their command, are practically without any control whatever. They have no rule except their whims to guide them in dealing with questions affecting the vital interests of hundreds of millions to whom they are alien in religion, race,

language etc., etc.,—almost in every thing which creates sympathy between man and man. Our advice to the rulers of India, from the lordly Viceroy to the tiny constable dressed in authority to "lord it over their fellows, is to commit to memory the Slokas of Moha-Mudgar, and to become as wise as their author was. What a mountain-load of misery would have been removed from the world if the rulers of men had constantly kept the stern fact before their mind's eye that they were here only for a very brief period and their real duty was not to lord it over their fellows but to nourish them.

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# Indian and European Yoga

(By Babu Moti Lal Ghose.)

The Amrita Bazar Patrika. June 15, 1922.

Whether it is nature or it is education that has done it we cannot say, but the instincts of Hindus and those of Europeans show a marked contrast. The Europeans generally speaking have a low opinion of 'yoga' ; but the European is no less a 'yogee' than the Hindu. 'Yoga' means union which is brought about by a concentration of the mind. By concentration the mind is brought in union with something beyond it. The object of the Hindu yoga is the union of the mind with the Great Principle which gives life to the universe. The European practice of the 'Yoga' is that which enables him to make discoveries in arts and science, the improvement of society, and other matters relating to this world.

Mr. Gladstone was an example of a great European mind. He had been ever thinking of the Irish question. On the other hand Mr. Gouri Sankar who was minister of an Indian State, afterwards gave up his connection with the external world and spent his last days in trying to direct his mind towards the Great Principle which gave him life.

In matters relating to this world the Hindu is a baby in comparison with the European. The amount



of thought that is given by Europeans to what a Hindu would think a very insignificant matter, will fill the latter with amazement. Any such question, if placed before a Hindu, will not concern him to enquire which way it is decided. But when it is placed before a European, he will subject it to a masterly analysis, as if it were a momentous question upon which hung the destiny of the world. The other day I saw some official papers in connection with a grant to an Indian official who had served at a time of famine. His superior had recommended a grant of a few rupees as a special consideration for his eminent services. The local authorities sanctioned the grant and then it was submitted to the Governor in Council. The Governor in Council, however, conclusively proved that there are objections to the proposal, for, if the grant were sanctioned it would create a precedent which might, at some future period at a time of famine lead an official, under like circumstances, if backed by two of his superiors successively, to prefer claim upon Government. A Hindu under the circumstances would have thought the matter too trifling to deserve so much thought and trouble.

The connection of an English official in India with his locality is of the slightest kind. If a man is a temporary resident of the world, and an Englishman's connection with India is much less permanent, then an Indian official's connection with his place of work is of few months only, for he may be transferred any day from his district. Yet he usually works as if he was born in

the district, was expected to die there, and expected to live there even after death. Sir Stuart Hogg, a former Chairman of the Calcutta Corporation was watching with pleasure the planting of trees on a certain foot-path in Calcutta. He said, "How beautiful would these trees look fifty years hence." A gentleman who stood by him then asked with a smile, "Where would you be then?" Sir Stuart Hogg was perfectly aware that there was no chance of ever enjoying the beauty that he was creating for the next generation in the city of Calcutta. But that thought did not blunt his zeal in the least.

The average European of the higher class spends his minutes and hours in keeping himself acquainted with the affairs of the world—what is China doing ; whether the third clause of such a measure would not lead to such a result ; what was the object of the Bolshevic movement towards Afghanistan etc.? He is ever trying to better his condition, to increase his wealth and influence, and to put down his rival. All these make him very smart, very shrewd and very capable ; and therefore when he comes across an Indian, he finds in him a dull, apathetic mass of human flesh, who has yet to grow much to be like him. He naturally comes to the conclusion that the Indian belongs to an inferior race ; and as a matter of fact, Indians do feel themselves very small, when worldly matters are concerned, before high class Europeans.

But the Indian shows greater activity in other concerns of life which have been neglected by Europeans.

It is no wonder that the Europeans as a rule should consider that the 'Yoga' is a puerile occupation for they have no experience whatever in that subject. We are, however, really surprised to see that Europeans are coming to encroach upon what Hindus consider their forte. It is absurd for Europeans with their giant armies and dynamites and machine-guns, to come and preach humanity to Hindus,—Hindus, who have come to consider animal food as an abomination because it cannot be obtained without giving pain to the lower animals.

We do not think that the Hindus should follow European methods. We, on the contrary, think that Europeans should follow the methods of the Hindus. For, with all that Europeans have done they have not been able as yet to provide against death. A European may ensconce himself within iron walls hundred feet high, and defended by millions of soldiers; but still, he will be carried away when the last day arrives. That man alone is, therefore, intelligent who provides for his permanent home. The foolish European whom the movements of China madden with anxiety learns at the time of his death, that the question which had engrossed his attention was not at all a relevant one. Whether there is another world or not is quite beside the mark. There is no doubt that Hindus show greater prudence than Europeans in providing for future existence. The Hindu believes that the souls of men live after death, and that they are subject to the laws of attractions. The souls that have attractions for a higher life

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do not come back. But those whose souls have been moulded by the "Eastern Questions" and "Frontier fortifications" and such other gross worldly matters are by the laws of attraction, forced down again to the earth. When Sri Krishna wanted to send a weaver to the highest heaven he inquired what was the price of twist there. The great European statesman with his Eastern Questions will find that in the future world his occupation is gone.

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